SPECIAL ISSUE

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NEW SPANISH CINEMA

Guest Editor: Katherine S. Kovacs

With feature articles by Katherine S. Kovacs, Roman Gubern, Luis O. Arata, Marvin D'Lugo, Annette Insdorf, Marsha Kinder, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Jose Luis Borau

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THE NEW SPANISH CINEMA
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CONTENTS

Cover Angelina Molina in *La Sabina* (1979)

Photos courtesy of. . .

Cover	LA SABINA (El Imán s.a.)
1 and 2	!BIENVENIDO, MR. Marshall! (Filmoteca Nacional de España)
7, 8 and 9	EL CRIMEN DE CUENCA (Encine s.a.)
3 and 4	CAMADA NEGRA (El Imán s.a.)
5	EL CORAZON DEL BOSQUE (Arándano s.a.)
6	MARAVILLAS (Arándano s.a.)
22 thru 25, 27	FURTIVOS (El Imán s.a.)
26	HAY QUE MATAR A "B" (El Imán s.a. — Luis Megino p.c.)
28	MI QUERIDA SEÑORITA (El Imán s.a.)
29	RIO ABAJO *(On The Line)* (Amber Files)
12, 13, 14	CRIA CUERVOS (Elías Querejeta p.c.)
10 and 11	EL ESPÍRITU DE LA COLMENA (Elías Querejeta p.c.)
15 and 16	MAMA CUMPLE CIEN AÑOS (Elías Querejeta p.c.)
17 thru 20	BODAS DE SANGRE (Emiliano Piedra)
21	A UN DIOS DESCONOCIDO (Elías Querejeta p.c.)
30 and 31	TRISTANA (Epoca Films) (Filmoteca Nacional de España)

Introduction:

Background on New Spanish Cinema

Katherine S. Kovács

When Generalíssimo Francisco Franco's Nationalist forces defeated the Republican troops in 1939, a long period of repression, poverty, and isolation began. More than a million people died in the Civil War, thousands more were imprisoned or forced into exile, and Spain was left physically, economically, and psychologically devastated. With the support of the Falangists, General Franco created a totalitarian one-party state based upon a military sense of life and committed to anti-regionalist, anti-Marxist, profoundly Catholic values. For the duration of Franco's rule, there would be no free elections, no opposition parties, and no free press in Spain.

For many years this system of government stifled all creative impulses in the arts in general and in cinema in particular. Filmmakers were required to submit both the shooting scripts and their completed movies to government censors who could approve, cut, change, or prohibit them at any time and without giving specific reasons.[1] It was understood that not only movies on overtly political subjects but also those on controversial past events and current themes would be banned.[2] As a result, for many years Spanish movies were reduced to insipid comedies or costume dramas that extrolled Spain's glorious past.

In the early 1960s, when Spain embarked upon new economic policies designed to attract foreign investors, this situation began to change. Within a decade the influx of foreign capital, the opening of new factories, and the creation of new industries, along with a dramatic surge in tourism, transformed Spain from a backward, primarily rural and agricultural land into a modern, industrialized, urbanized society. As a result of the economic boom and the increased contacts with Western Europe, there began to filter into Spain ideas and trends that even Franco could not control. Indeed, in some cases, as part of a government campaign to improve its image abroad, Franco himself initiated certain mea-

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sures that would have profound and somewhat unforeseen consequences. Thus in the early 1960s his government began to encourage film production by granting subsidies to students at the Official School of Cinematography (EOC). With these funds a number of talented directors made their debut. (In fact, the film school would prove to be an important training ground for filmmakers throughout its existence, from 1948 to 1975.) Among them were Carlos Saura, Manuel Summers, Miguel Picazo, Jorge Grau, Angelino Fons, and others who would soon be associated with the New Spanish Cinema movement (1963-67). Many of them tried to expand the subjects and themes that could be treated in film. They soon discovered that while the government encouraged them to make and to show their movies at international film festivals, the same movies were often cut or even prohibited at home.

But this double standard of presenting a liberal image abroad while continuing restrictive policies at home could not be maintained for long. It began to crumble even before the death of Franco, in the last years of his rule. By the early 1970s, although the same repressive legislation remained on the books, it was clear that change was imminent and the *dictadura* was gradually being replaced by a *dictablanda*.[3] It was then that such notable movies as *The Spirit of the Beehive* (1972),[4] *Cousin Angelica* (1973), *Cría cuervos* (1975), and *Furtivos* (1975) were produced. In these works Erice, Saura, and Borau found new and imaginative ways of getting around the constraints imposed by censorship. They resorted to nonlinear plots, allusion, symbols, and parables in order to deal with such taboo subjects as sexual repression, the role of the church in Spanish society, and the legacy of the Civil War. Their perfection of such tactics and solutions to the problem of censorship attests to the power of the artist to defy and transcend restrictive systems.

This is not to suggest that all of the movies made in Spain in the early 1970s were complex and symbolic. At best, movies of this kind represented only a small percentage of the total number of films produced each year.[5] Nevertheless, some of them (including *Spirit of the Beehive* and *Furtivos*) achieved spectacular box office success in addition to critical acclaim. Their commercial success suggests that they met a long-felt and generalized need on the part of Spaniards for serious and honest treatment of issues that had been postponed too long. Spanish filmgoers wanted more than simple entertainment. They were willing to abandon their role of passive spectatorship and to become active participants in a process of "reading" and assigning meanings to cinematic representations. Thus, both for filmmakers and audiences, this was a special period in Spanish history, during which cinematic forms were invested with political and social significance.

Therefore one cannot divide recent Spanish film history neatly into two periods that correspond to the time before Franco's death and to the years after. Even before his death in November 1975, a process of change was well under way. This process would continue for the next year and a half, when the apparati of dictatorship were being dismantled and Spaniards were preparing for the first general elections of June 1977. During this "transition period," the general climate as well as specific legislation pertaining to film accelerated the process of evolution that would transform the film industry and modify cinematic styles and themes.

In August 1976, formerly prohibited Spanish and foreign movies were finally released. Among them were Patino's documentary on the Civil War entitled *Canciones para después de una guerra* and Luis García Berlanga's *Tamanõ* natural.[6] Their exhibition was a prelude to the complete abolition of censorship in November 1977. As might be expected, movies that dealt with explicitly sexual themes or with political subjects became all the rage. Around this time, there began to appear documentary and feature films dealing with different aspects of the Spanish Civil War.[7] As one film critic remarked, for a time it looked as if the Civil War movie "could well become and should become a genre like the Western."[8] As part of this overriding preoccupation with the suppressed past, other historical periods which in some way or another shed

light on contemporary Spain were also reclaimed as cinematic subject matter.[9] In addition to documentary reconstructions and fictional histories, in the late 1970s, some movies dealt with contemporary occurrences, recording the customs and language of certain segments of the population,[10] or incorporating recent political events into fictional narratives in order to show how they had determined the behavior as well as the destiny of the characters.[11]

The return to democracy that created new genres and introduced new subjects into Spanish film also released the creative energies of many directors of diverse backgrounds, ages, and political orientations. At work were José Antonio Bardem, Luis García Berlanga, and Carlos Saura, who already enjoyed international reputations; others, of the same generation as Saura, who had made their first movies in the 1960s and early 1970s (Basillo, Martin Patino, (Pedro Olea, and José Luis Borau); younger cineastes from Madrid and Barcelona who appeared in the final years of the dictatorship (Antonio Drove, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, Ricardo Franco, José Luis García Sanchez, Francisco Betriu, and Francisco Daunis); and filmmakers who began their careers after the death of Franco (Ventura Pons, Francisco Trueba, Fernando Colomo, Bigas Luna, Pilar Miró, José Luis Garci, etc.).

While they share no one cinematic style, in general these directors tend to rely less upon the complex, fairy-tale-like structures of the previous period. In their works one can detect a movement toward simpler, more direct means of expression. At the time (around 1978-79) the feelings of optimism that had sustained Spaniards for the first few years began to wane (particularly following the attempted right-wing coup of February 1978). As a result, although Spanish filmmakers continued to garner a disproportionate share of kudos and prizes at international festivals,[12] there were signs that the creative explosion of film activity was beginning to die down. Perhaps this was an inevitable reaction to the euphoria that followed Franco's death; perhaps the themes of the past, of dictatorship, and the Civil War could only be mined for so long before audiences and filmmakers tired of them. Or perhaps this shift had little to do with aesthetic questions but reflected changing production and distribution conditions in Spain and abroad. Luis Berlanga believes that in that period the problem of political censorship which hindered moviemakers for so many years was replaced by what he called "economic censorship."

Unlike France or Italy, where a true cinema industry and infrastructure exist, in Spain most movies are made by independent producers working with limited budgets. Over the past few years they have been hardhit by dramatically spiraling production costs. Moreover, with the exception of the films of Carlos Saura, Spanish movies are generally not distributed outside of Spain.[13] Therefore, producers are forced to rely almost exclusively on the home market to recoup their investment. That market has been declining steadily over the past decade,[14] both because film attendance in general has been slipping and because since the abolition of censorship, the home market has been inundated with foreign—principally American and Italian—movies. As multi-million-dollar American movies make it more difficult for low-budget Spanish movies to compete, Spanish producers receive ever smaller revenues for their movies, which in turn means that they have less money available to reinvest in film production.[15] The impact of this situation was dramatically illustrated in 1979, which saw a vertiginous decline in film production from the preceding year.[16] Since then, even though the number of movies made has steadily increased, the situation of Spanish cinema remains precariously tied to the influx of foreign films and to protective laws as they are applied and enforced by the Spanish government. Over the past seven years, while the government paid a subsidy of 15% of the budget to all Spanish films, this financial protection proved to be insufficient, primarily because legislation pertaining to film *seesawed* unpredictably between abolishing film quotas altogether and imposing restrictions and tariffs on foreign competition.[17] It is no

wonder that the number of innovative or daring movies made over the past few years has declined. Competition from commercial foreign movies, combined with the saturated interest in Spain's past and changed political circumstances & economic possibilities, has made producers more cautious & less likely to take risks that might jeopardize their very survival. In a country like Spain it is only by protecting film as an industry that film as an art form can flourish.

There is every indication that Spain's new socialist government, the first to hold power since the Civil War, is committed to such a course of action. Prime Minister Felipe González has affirmed his interest in revitalizing Spanish cultural life and is expected to devote considerable attention and resources to Spanish theatre, television, and film. The Spanish press has speculated about some of the measures that he will probably take. They include facilitating bank credits for film production, enforcing quota systems on foreign movies, subsidizing big-budget Spanish films and those that are distributed abroad, encouraging cooperation and joint projects between the (state-owned) Spanish television networks and the independent film producers, aiding in financing the construction of new film studios. The implementation of these measures would place Spanish cinema on a more solid financial and industrial base, liberating filmmakers from commercial considerations that can stymie treatment of controversial subjects almost as effectively as can political restrictions.

A recent sign of the government's desire to foster a free and uncompromising cinema, a cinema that offers more than mindless farces, sex comedies, or escapist entertainment, may be seen in the fact that shortly after taking office in December 1982, Felipe González appointed Pilar Miró as Spain's General Director of Cinematography. In 1979, Miró directed one of the most controversial movies to have been made in post-Franco Spain, *El Crimen de Cuenca.* Because of the criticism leveled against the actions of Spain's rural Guardia Civil, the movie was confiscated and withheld from release for over two years.[18] (When it was finally released after a court judgement, it went on to critical acclaim and phenomenal box office success.) Miró's appointment can be seen as a symbolic gesture on the part of the government, an acknowledgement that the old idols in Spain—the army, the police, the church, and other groups or institutions that limited individual rights and freedoms—have fallen, and that now Spain is open to a multiplicity of parties, points of view, and interpretations of the past. Perhaps then this appointment and this government mark the real end of Spain's long period of transition and the beginning of a new era. This special issue of *QRFS* is therefore dedicated both to the past achievements and to the future prospects of Spanish film.

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NOTES

[1]There was no censorship code until 1963 and even then the law remained ambiguous and vague.

[2]Between 1942 and 1976 the government required that weekly newsreels be shown with all movies. This effectively destroyed the development of a free documentary movement.

[3]This expression gained currency in the early 1970s. It is based upon a play on words. In Spanish "dictadura" is the word for dictatorship. The word "dura" also means hard and "blanda" means soft. Thus the "dictadura" (hard dictatorship) was replaced by a "dictablanda" (soft dictatorship) in the final years of Franco, when things were, in effect, softening or loosening up.

[4]*The Spirit of the Beehive* is considered by a number of Spanish film critics to have been "the most important film of the decade," which influenced a number of other movies. Ana Torrent not only appeared in a similar role in Saura's *Cria cuervos,* but more recently was also in Jaime de Armiñan's *EL Nido.*

[5]Although most of the movies were works of pure escapism, a few of them were identified as "third way" movies—neither vulgar comedies nor hermetic dramas such as those of Saura's. Out of the "third way" movies new kinds of films would develop in the post-Franco period.

[6]Patino's movie was the first documentary to deal directly with the Spanish Civil War. It was made in 1971 but could not be shown until after Franco's death. *Tamaño natural (Life Size)* was made by Berlanga in France. Because of its subject—a lonely man (Michel Piccoli) who receives a mail-order mannequin (a woman) to keep him company—it too, was banned.

[7]Particularly between 1974 and 1977, both feature films and documentaries were made on the Civil War. Among the features were Armiñán's *Jo . . . Papá* (1975), the story of a Civil War combatant who retraces his steps; Jaime Camino's *Las largas vacaciones del '36* (1976), which describes the War from the point of view of bourgeois Republicans living in Catalonia in 1936; and Alfonso Ungría's *Soldados* (1978). Some of the outstanding documentaries include Patino's *Caudillo* (1977), Camino's *La vieja memoria* (1978), which contains interviews with a number of the people involved in the War in Catalonia (a Spanish version of *The Sorrow and the Pity*); *¿ Por qué perdimos la guerra?* (1978), which presents the anarchist point of view on the war, and G. Herralde's *Raza, el espiritu de Franco* (1978), which offers a profile of Franco as well as a discussion of the movie *Raza* that he himself wrote. Other directors including Berlanga and Borau have expressed interest in making a movie on the Civil War but seem to have abandoned their projects because of increased production costs.

[8]Antonio Gracia Rayo, "La Década de los setenta en el cinematógrafo español," *Cinema 2002*, 61-62 (1980), 27.

[9]Several films dealing with the 1910s and 1920s focused upon workers' movements or the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, including Antonio Drove's *La Verdad sobre el caso Savolta* (1979), Pedro Oleo's *Un hombre llamado 'Flor de Otoño'* (1978); and Ricardo Franco's *Pascual Duarte* (1976). The period of Resistance fighting after the defeat of the Republic in the 1940s and early 1950s is dealt with in Mario Camus's *Los días del pasado* and Manuel Gutiérrez Aragon's *El corazón del bosque* (1978).

[10]Several recent movies made by Fernando Colomo or Fernando Trueba (director of *Opera Prima*, 1980) present the life styles of young urban inhabitants of Madrid whose language is reproduced and their aspirations described. These movies have an improvised quality that have made them very popular in Spain. In a similar vein we might include Saura's *De prisa, de prisa*, an attempt to show how juvenile delinquents live in Madrid. This film also has a documentary feeling about it, since Saura used nonprofessional actors.

[11]The first of these kinds of movies was Garci's *Asignatura pendiente*, where the fictional characters respond to the death of Franco by embarking on a long overdue affair that was not possible when Franco as alive.

[12]In a single year (1980), Spanish films won prizes at the Berlin Film Festival *(De prisa, de prisa)*, Venice *(Opera Prima)*, Cannes *(Patrimonio Nacional* and *Bodas de sangre)*, and Moscow (best actress award given to Mercedes Sampietro, star of Pilar Miró's *Gary Cooper que estás en los cielos)*. The same year, Armiñan's *El Nido* was nominated for an Oscar in the category of best foreign film. Even in the midst of the Spanish film "crisis," this trend has continued. In 1982 at the Montreal Film Festival a special homage was organized to Spanish film. Mario Camus's *La Colmena* won a prize at the Berlin Film Festival in 1983. And on April 11, 1983, Garci's *Volver a Empezar* (To Begin Again), selected as best foreign film of 1982, became the first Spanish film to receive an Oscar.

[13]In 1981 Foreign sales of Spanish films amounted to $7 million, as compared to $9.5 million in 1980. The bulk of foreign sales was to Latin American countries, followed by the United States.

[14]In 1969 there were 117 million spectators for films in Spain as compared to 51 million in 1975.

[15]Last year Spanish film earned only 20% of the total amount of film revenues in Spain.

[16]According to official government estimates, in 1978 101 movies were made in Spain as compared with only 71 in 1979. The following year saw a substantial increase, with the number of movies rising to 110. Figures for 1981 even topped this, with the number of movies approaching 150. The estimates for 1982 are 135 films. (Note: This list includes co-productions.)

[17]In November 1977, when censorship was abolished, special theaters were set aside for films of excessive violence and sexual frankness. At the same time a two-for-one law was established, which meant that for every two foreign films, theater owners were required to show one Spanish movie. In July 1979, the quota system was declared illegal by the courts, which meant that film distributors no longer had to show any Spanish movies or help to finance them as they had done in the past to comply with the law. In January 1980, the quota was reinstituted and it became mandatory to show one Spanish film for every three foreign films. In addition, distributors had to pay a dubbing fee for foreign film distribution (which amounted to a certain percentage of the box office revenues). It was then that the government announced that a special premium would be paid to big-budget Spanish films aimed at competing on the international market. This law did not go into effect for almost a year.

[18]Since Franco's death a small group of movies had been banned or denied the 15% government subsidy. In the latter category was Imanol Uribe's *El proceso de Burgos*, a documentary about the trial of sixteen ETA Basque militants in December 1970. Another movie denied the subsidy was *Después de . . .* by Cecilia and José J. Bartholomé, dealing with the end of the Franco era. Two movies were denied release because of their explicit sexual content: Pasolini's *Saló (The 100 Days of Sodom)* and *The Empire of the*

Senses. In addition to Miró's *El Crimen de Cuenca*, which was under military embargo from November 1979 until March 30, 1981, Fernando Ruiz's *Rocio* (1982) is to be withheld until several scenes and dialogue are cut. This is a documentary about a religious procession held each year near Huelva. During the course of the film, an elderly actor recalls the executions that took place during the Civil War in the village of Almont when it fell to the Nationalists. As a result of a court order, the movie was yanked out of exhibition after it was released in June 1982.

Berlanga Life Size:

An Interview with Luis García Berlanga

Katherine S. Kovács

Luis García Berlanga has been directing movies in Spain for the past thirty years (see filmography section). Along with Juan Antonio Bardem, he is the link between the generation of Buñuel and that of Carlos Saura. In addition to being one of Spain's most popular directors, often compared with Billy Wilder, until 1983 he was head of the Spanish Filmoteca. The following interview took place in the Filmoteca headquarters on the outskirts of Madrid in August, 1981.

KSK: Since my arrival in Spain, producers, film critics, almost everyone with whom I have spoken has asserted that right now there is a crisis in Spanish film. Some producers have told me that unless a Spanish movie is a complete box office smash, it doesn't recoup its production costs. Is that correct?

Berlanga: Yes, yes, there is indeed a crisis. It is simple mathematics, a question of market. In a free economy there is a certain law of supply and demand, right? And even though I don't think that producers are always sincere about money matters, in this instance, they probably are. Spanish cinema has a very limited market. There is practically no foreign distribution. We don't know why. If I were vain I would say it's because they don't understand us or that they haven't been exposed to Spanish film (abroad) because we haven't known how to create a market. If I were modest about it, I might say that it's because our cinema is not good and people don't like it. In any event, the reality is that there is virtually no external market. It is extremely difficult to sell one of our movies abroad and those that are sold are almost given away because the prices paid are so much less than actual production costs. The producer is therefore not able to recoup

his investment. The ideal situation for a Spanish film would be one in which 20 to 30% of the budget came from aid in the form of government subsidies, another 30 to 40% from the home market, which is the normal amount. The remaining 30% should come from foreign markets. But in the present situation, in which there are no foreign markets, 30% is not covered. So the producer is right when he talks about the cinema industry being in crisis.

Well then, how can we overcome this crisis? That's where the problems begin. Everyone has a solution. That's what we in Spain call "adjudication"[1] — it's been one of our pastimes since the Middle Ages when famous arbitrators would resolve all questions. In this particular case, there are many points of view. I am a creator, maybe a good one, maybe not, but in any event, I don't worry too much about this situation. Perhaps that's a failing on my part. As a film professional maybe I should be constantly involved in the struggle to find a way out of this difficult situation. But the truth is that after making a movie I close myself off in my own world, in what I call my "submarine," disconnected from the outside. So I am certainly not the person to say that certain solutions are good ones and others aren't. It's like the cat chasing its own tail. If a movie is bad, it doesn't make much money, which means that the budget for the next one will be smaller which means that probably that one will be worse and there is less likelihood that it will be sold abroad. So it's a vicious circle. We go around devouring our own tail, making movies that are always smaller, cheaper, and poorer in quality. Even if we are sometimes able to cover the costs, those movies are still not exportable. Now that's a shame but that's how it is. Recently a new decree was promulgated. It offers greater government protection to films with bigger budgets. This is an effort to foster more high quality movies. But so far the producers don't seem to be very enthusiastic. I'm sure that they'll look for a way of balancing this out. They'll study very closely to see exactly when the five million additional pesetas should be invested. Maybe they'll be able to make movies with a budget of 35 or 40 million pesetas.[2] But even with that kind of budget, it's hard to make a movie that dazzles the eyes, a movie with spectacle. For me a movie that doesn't have these elements is not exciting.

As far as the aesthetic question goes, for the past few years I have been reevaluating my ideas, engaged in an examination of my conscience. After all, I was one of the first directors to participate in the Salamanca talks[3]... when there was a sort of break with the official cinema that existed then, a cinema that we called "Franquist." Of course, part of it was, because it was made during the Franco regime. But at the same time, it was a cinema which had an industrial infrastructure. It reflected popular tastes. Ordinary people liked it. They liked the movie stars who existed. There were studios, set designers, some of whom were among the best in Europe. We had a total industrial organization. At Salamanca what did we do? We said that you had to make movies that would bear witness to contemporary life, that would serve as testimony. We said that you had to take the camera out into the streets, film daily life like the Italian neo-Realists. And what happened? The producers discovered that movies made in the street cost less, that studios were not necessary. Little by little unemployment increased, the studios were sold and disappeared. In short, almost the entire industrial infrastructure moved elsewhere and the cinema industry was virtually liquidated. Nowadays, for example, in my last movie [*Patrimonio Nacional*, 1981] I needed a palace. At one point I lost a year and a half looking for one because few palaces exist in Madrid. We had to shoot the movie in Madrid because it would have been too costly to leave the capital. And in Madrid there were only seven or eight palaces. Of those, three or four were museums that we couldn't use because other official organizations needed them for their daily activities. Two or three belonged to aristocrats who wouldn't give them to me either because they said that my movie *La Escopeta*

Nacional had attacked them. So we reached the point where we decided that if we were going to make the movie, we would have to do it with sets. But that didn't work for two reasons. First, because of what it would have cost today to build the sets for a palace. We just didn't have a large enough budget. And even if we had had the money, there are no set designers working today who could have built us a palace.

KSK: What did you finally do?

Berlanga: Finally we found a palace that belonged to a bank. We got permission to use it through the intervention of a friend.... Maybe my answer has been overly long. All I meant to say is that there is a crisis, which I really don't see a way out of. For if you say we should sell more of our movies abroad, the question remains how we can go about doing that. I just don't know how.

KSK: It is indeed a dilemma. In the United States for instance, it is very rare for Spanish films to be shown in commercial circuits. I believe that only two of your own movies are available even for 16 mm rental....

Berlanga: Yes, there's virtually nothing. Today the most exportable of our filmmakers is Carlos Saura. He's the only one who sells some of his movies around the world. But of course, one director cannot solve the problem. Yesterday when I was talking to Emiliano Piedra, the producer of *Bodas de sangre*, he told me that it was selling quite well, as were Saura's other movies, with the exception of *Cría*, which had been practically given away. So there really is no way out.

KSK: Then you see the crisis as being ultimately economic rather than artistic or cultural in nature.

Berlanga: Yes, it's totally economic. I don't mean to imply that we directors are all geniuses and that we all have talent, but what seems evident is that in terms of creativity, Spanish directors are neither better nor worse than their French or German counterparts. It is wholly a problem of lack of coordination among producers, directors, and the economy. The ideal for us would be not to have a few movies a year by great talents but to have a lot of movies, fifteen or twenty a year that would fit in perfectly with comparable kinds of movies made abroad. After all, great talent, the kind that wins the prize at Cannes and other film festivals, is more unusual and more a question of individual taste. In any event, right now in Spain we are a bit saturated with prizes. This year we got the prize at Berlin, at Cannes, and at a lot of festivals. So right now, the situation is reversed. There is widespread recognition that a number of talented Spanish filmmakers exist. That's why we get a lot of prizes. But I don't think that there is either as much talent as the number of international prizes would tend to suggest nor as little as the producers with their talk of a cinema crisis seem to imply. The truth lies somewhere in between.

KSK: How many feature films are made in Spain r?

Berlanga: On the average around 100 per year. The last two years the number fell but the average is still around 100. And I think that that's a lot — too many. A number of films only serve to help those film directors, screenwriters, and actors who were part of the now defunct film industry. Perhaps as many as 30% of these are totally unplayable. If they were released, no one would go to see them. There is also a small market for those movies that are not exactly pornographic...

KSK: The ones classified with an "S"?

Berlanga: Yes. There's a small market for these movies that along with horror films are exported abroad, to countries of the so-called "Third World." ... They are sold in Egypt, in the Arab countries and in Africa, which means that they can be made at a profit, since usually they cost around 10 million

pesetas and are shot in three or four weeks. Many times we don't even know they are being made and they do not open in the large cities of Spain.

KSK: How has the cinema changed in the last five or six years since the death of Franco?

Berlanga: It's changed and it hasn't changed.... Recently conservative people, the ultra-Conservatives in Spain, have been using a slogan that is an absolute sophism. They say that now that we film directors are finally free, we have not done anything good, which shows that it was a lie when we would excuse ourselves and say that we could not do certain things because of censorship. That is wholly false. What has happened is that we have had bad luck, now that there is relative freedom of expression (not total freedom, since there are still certain groups and ideologies that exert pressure).... Let me give you an example. The other day one of my old movies was shown on television, an excerpt from *Esa pareja feliz* ("That Happy Couple"). I was astonished to see that some dialogue, three lines, had been taken out. It's a movie I made in 1951 about a worker in a film studio where they are making a movie. It's a satire of the kinds of movies that were made under Franco, all of those historical films. Anyway, the movie begins as a historical film is being shot in a studio. There is a Queen who is supposed ... to commit suicide by throwing herself out of a window. Our hero is waiting for her underneath the window holding an air mattress in which to catch her but it breaks and she falls on the ground. The director asks what happened and the man explains that "the monarchy fell on top of me." In the television broadcast they cut out the word monarchy along with some other allusions to the monarchy. I was extremely surprised, especially because in Spain we now have a democratic king who is giving us a powerful example of democracy and of civilization. I am sure that if he were aware of these kinds of cuts he would be equally surprised. Unfortunately, there are always people who go further than is necessary. In short, there still remain certain small outbreaks of censorship — at least on television. More generally what has happened is that instead of the political and ideological censorship that we used to have we are now feeling the effects of what one might call economic censorship. We still can't undertake certain film projects that were prohibited under Franco. I have a project that is as prohibited — well, I have many, but there are one or two that I would still like to film, especially one about the Spanish Civil War, but I can't because it would cost a minimum of 150 million pesetas.

KSK: But no government group or agency has to approve either a script or the final version of a film, right?

Berlanga: Right. Officially, bureaucratically, censorship no longer exists. There is only the possibility of a denunciation before a judge. But this is the same thing that can happen if you insult someone in the street. If someone feels offended or annoyed by a movie, he or she can file a complaint before a judge and the judge can order that the movie be sequestered, which is what happened with *The Crime of Cuenca*.

KSK: And then the case has to go to court?

Berlanga: Yes, there has to be a trial and certain legal guarantees. It's not like before when you were told to cut or change a movie or it could not even be made. Then you had no recourses and no possibility of fighting against it.

KSK: What happened with *The Crime of Cuenca*?

Berlanga: *The Crime of Cuenca* was released for precisely this reason. There was a court case and judgment in which it was decided that the movie did not constitute either a "a crime or an aggressive act" against the state. So it will be shown. I believe that the movie will open any day now.[4] I also think

that (the director) Pilar Miró voluntarily cut some things out of the movie, not because she was told to, but just because of recent political events.[5] She did cut some moments out of the movie, but she alone decided to do so.

KSK: Who are some of the young directors whose work you find interesting?

Berlanga:...The most interesting ones from Madrid —because as you know movies are made both in Madrid and in Barcelona — in addition to Carlos Saura, there is Manolo Guttiérez Aragón. I don't know if you've seen his movie *Maravillas* ... He is certainly one of the most interesting young directors. There is also José María Guttiérez, director of *Arriba Hazaña.* Then there are some others from Madrid whom you might have heard of including Pedro Olea, Manolo Summers, Angelina Fons, and Fernando Colomo, who is with Trueba's group. There is also a new director whom I like a lot who always makes low-budget modest movies. He's part of a school in Spain that amuses me a great deal because I am Mediterranean by temperament. I enjoy games and like movies that don't respect institutions, movies that might be dubbed "anarchic," that are in favor of transgression and of undermining the established order. Along these lines is the cinema of this young man, Pedro Almodóvar, who made *Pepi, Luci, Bom and the Other Girls in the Crowd.* In the same style there are those movies made in Barcelona and in Valencia, in Barcelona by Bellmunt and in Valencia by Carles Mira, who made *San Vicente Virrey,* on the life of Saint Vicente, a very very sacrilegious movie on the life of a saint who is venerated in Valencia. Recently he directed *Con el culo al aire* ("Bottoms Up"), which I believe will go the Montreal Film Festival. It continues in the same vein of impudent demystification...as does Bellmunt's *Saluti força el canut,* shot in Barcelona. If the title were translated it would be somewhat vulgar and might shock some people...but I liked the movie.

These are some of the young directors. There is also Bigas Luna and Gustavo Herralde, both of whom are working in the United States. And then there is a great director who now lives in the U.S., José Luis Borau. I think he is one of our most important filmmakers. And that's it, more or less, although I might have forgotten one or two names ... but these are the filmmakers who have attracted my attention.

KSK: How did you get started in filmmaking?

Berlanga: I always liked dabbling in everything. I painted, I wrote poetry, I was involved in the theatre, I did almost everything, everything, that is, that was unrelated to strict academic disciplines... But among all of these activities I was always fascinated by movies. Then once while watching a movie, I had something that I can only describe as a religious experience.... Even though I'm an agnostic, when I was watching this movie I felt a kind of divine grace, I had a kind of revelation. That must be what happens to people who experience miracles .... It was then that I knew that I had to become a film director. The movie I was watching was a version of *Don Quijote* by the German director Pabst... Along with Murnau he was one of the two great German directors before Hitler. From that moment on, I decided to concentrate on making movies....

I came to Madrid from a provincial town and entered the first class of the Cinema School. When I finished the school, a group of friends and I founded a kind of film cooperative where I made my first movie, *Esa pareja feliz,* which (Juan Antonio) Bardem and I both directed. Many people think that Bardem and I made many films together, but that was the only one.

KSK: Yes, people seem to associate the two of you.

Berlanga: At one time people used to talk about the three B's: Buñuel, Bardem, and Berlanga. Actually the critics, who always like to define or classify people, used to refer to Bardem and me as the "two palm trees." Why? Because of a statement that

Bardem once made in an interview at a film festival. When he was asked whether there were interesting directors working in Spain, he said that in the desert of Spanish film, there were only two palm trees, himself and me. When Buñuel returned to Spain to make *Virdiana* and later *Tristana*, that's when the critics started talking about the three B's.... Of course, later came Saura and all of the others.

KSK: When you were studying film in the film school, did you see Buñuel's movies, *L'Age d'or* and *Le Chien Andalou*?

Berlanga: Yes, *L'Age d'or* was one of the first movies we located in an effort to start what would later become the Spanish Filmoteca. Actually the film school was a kind of laguna, a catacomb where we could see a lot of movies. In the first period we brought in movies from abroad. Even copies of movies that were prohibited in Spain were shown there. That is to say, we had some freedom, not, of course, as much as in a democracy, but we did have access to more movies than were generally seen in Spain... Of course when we saw the most movies was when we went out of the country, to France or Germany, just to see films.

KSK: How about Buñuel's later movies, which he did in Mexico in the 1950s? Did you see them? Did they have any influence on the filmmakers of your generation or the subsequent one?

Berlanga: Well, no, no. I can't really identify any direct influence of Buñuel. The first Spanish director who has declared that Buñuel influenced him, who calls Buñuel his teacher, is Carlos Saura. And I must say that I don't really see it. There are so many differences between Saura's films and those of Buñuel. But that's what Saura says.

As for the rest of us, Buñuel was not all that influential. Our first and greatest influence was Italian neo-Realism. That was the first. Then came the Nouvelle Vague, which was important for the next group of filmmakers. For those of my generation, we were all marked by neo-Realism. Later, other directors were divided between those who continued in the tradition of neo-Realism and those who were shaped by the *Cahiers du Cinema* and the Nouvelle Vague. It was this latter group which began a revalorization of American film. Through the Nouvelle Vague they recuperated the love of and fascination for American films, which my generation did not share. For a while we hated American movies; we said that it was necessary to escape from their influence not only because they reflected certain ideological and capitalist viewpoints but also because they were escape movies, which did not reflect reality, as we wanted to do. So for a while Spanish filmmakers were divided among the followers of neo-Realism, (which later became critical realism) and the followers of the Nouvelle Vague, who were interested in American films. Little by little the lines between the two camps began to fade. Today, for example, a number of young Spanish filmmakers take American film formulas as their point of departure. In fact, most of them do, with the exception of a small group who are interested in the new German cinema and in Fassbinder...

KSK: In your own movies, are you aware of certain stages, of an evolution in your development?

Berlanga: I don't think so. I don't say it proudly because that's probably not good, people should evolve. I am beginning to see myself like some of our pure-blooded aristocrats who are very old-fashioned .... I am afraid that I have not changed or evolved. If I were patriotic or very Conservative, I would be proud and say that I had remained true to my principles, like those people who remain committed to the same ethics and morality forever. I think that I have remained true to my principles, but in spite of myself, except perhaps for the movie about the life-sized doll (*Tamaño naturel* ["Life-Size"]) that I made with [Michel] Piccoli, which is perhaps a more intimate film than I usually do .... a

reflection on loneliness and solitude, not an erotic film as many people think ....

KSK: Did it open here?

Berlanga: Yes, it opened here.

KSK: Without censorship problems?

Berlanga: I don't remember very well, but I don't think that it had problems. In any event, if Franco hadn't died yet (when it was released) it was at the end of his life. Except for this movie, in all of my other movies the constant theme is the anguish felt by individuals in a society that is made up of associations, groups, etc. I always explore the ways in which people are devoured by what is not individual and unique.... the disappearance in today's society of the possibility of self-realization, of living free and alone. That is the recurring idea in all of my movies.... from the first to the last, there is always a man who starts out in a given situation and who thinks that he is going to attain certain ends or realize certain goals that will make him better and more free. At the end of the movie he usually ends up in the same situation as at the beginning, or sometimes worse off. Society doesn't pardon the individual's efforts to struggle on his or her own and for his or her own objectives.

KSK: Nevertheless, your movies manage to express all that in amusing ways.

Berlanga: Thank you. I would never want to bore the public with a message.

Recorded and Translated by Katherine S. Kovács

NOTES

[1]The word used by Berlanga is "arbitrismo," which is related to "arbitrar," to arbitrate or referee.

[2]Before the devaluation of the peseta, there were around 90 pesetas to one dollar. Berlanga is talking about movies which cost between $390,000 and $450,000. By American standards, these are not expensive films.

[3]Berlanga is referring to the first National Film Congress which took place in Salamanca in May of 1955. This was an event of major importance in the history of Spanish film. It represented the first collective protest in postwar Spain. At the end of the five days, the assembled filmmakers and critics published a manifesto which deplored the sterility of Spanish films and objected to the strict censorship, stating that "Spanish cinema lives in isolation. It is isolated not only from the world but from our own reality."

[4]*El Crimen de Cuenca* did indeed open on August 13, 1981. Its director Pilar Miró, who began her career in television, went on to make other movies, among them *Gary Cooper que estás en los cielos* (1981). In January 1982, she became the General Director of Cinematography in Spain.

[5]This seems to be a reference to the attempted coup d'état which took place on February 23, 1981.

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Bienvenido Mr. Marshall (1953)

Survey of Spanish Film:

Trends, Problems, and Genres in the Post-Franco Cinema, 1975-1981

Román Gubern

After a long death struggle artificially prolonged in the interests of his political clique, Franco died in bed on November 20, 1975, after almost forty years of dictatorial rule over the Spanish people. The physical end of his autocratic reign over Spanish society led to a laborious and complex process of a transition towards democracy, in which the Franquist sector of the oligarchy still retained political power and control over the state governing bodies. After Franco died, all of his repressive legislation remained intact —including the Cinema Censorship Code of February 19, 1975. These factors explain the distinctive nature of Spain's political development and the particular evolution of Spanish filmmaking in the immediate post-Franco period.

During the final years of Franco, censorship had become less stringent, as might be expected from a system in its final crisis. The censors were also more subject to pressure from entertainment multinationals and from the Spanish film industry, which needed to expand its markets and profits. The Censorship Code of 1975 was but a formal recognition of this more permissive climate. The appearance of the first female nude on Spanish screens — the actress María José Cantudo in *La trastienda* (1975) by Jorge Grau —which in large part was responsible for the movie's big box office success, confirmed that the government was prepared to allow a certain evolution in Spanish film.

When Franco died, the Spanish film market was firmly controlled by North American multinational companies. Between 1972 and 1976, American movies released in Spain made 17,564,465,770 pesetas ($175,645,647.70), while Spanish films

grossed 14,750,698,045 pesetas ($147,506,980.45). Thus when a decree passed on November 11, 1977 abolished censorship, it affected the interests and plans of movie multinationals as well as of the national film companies. Between 1975 and 1977 what was aptly called a "cinema of reform" came into existence, one which tried to adjust to a political situation that was in flux while responding to new demands from the public. This adjustment was not always easy, as can be seen, for example, in the fact the censor still made twenty-one cuts in a movie by Francisco Betriu entitled *Furia española* (1976).

The "cinema of reform" (or "cinema of transition") was actually born during the last months of Franco's life in some movie projects which attempted to recuperate past memories of democracy, memories that had been repressed during the dark years of Franco. It was while Franco was dying that Jaime Camino began to shoot *Las largas vacaciones del '36* (1976), the first Spanish film that evoked the Civil War as experienced by middle- and lower-middle-class Republicans in Catalonia. During Franco's era this point of view was inadmissible in Spanish films (which is one of the reasons why the censors cut the final shot of the film showing Franco's Moorish troops occupying territory in Catalonia). *Retrato de familia* (1975), an adaptation of Miguel Delibes' novel *Mi idolatrado hijo Sisí* (1953), was also made during this period of transition. It presents a nonapologetic view of the pro-Franco bourgeoisie during the war and a cautious demystification of the so-called "Crusade" undertaken by the winners. But by far the most significant transition film was *Asignatura pendiente* (1977), by a new director who had had ample experience as a scriptwriter, José Luis Garci. This film broke new ground in its introduction of new kinds of characters and new political and personal situations. Its protagonist is a labor lawyer and member of a Communist union, *Comisiones Obreras* (Workers' Union). The film also contains scenes of the last Fascist homage to Franco held in Oriente Square in October, 1975, just before his death. References to the current political situation were skillfully combined with the theme of past time irrevocably lost, a theme that is played out in the relationship between a couple that embarks on a belated love affair because the moral repression of the Franco years had made it impossible for them to consummate their love earlier and at the appropriate time. Even though it is a somewhat trivial film, because of its topicality it enjoyed considerable box-office success. In a subsequent movie, *Sólos en la madrugada* (1978), Garci tried to repeat the same formula while concentrating on legalization of the Communist party and the first legislative elections (June 1977). His protagonist is a radio announcer, which allows him to nostalgically recreate the years in which radio was the most popular mass medium.

As has been indicated, the liberalization of censorship and of the laws governing film importation drastically increased the number of foreign movies shown. Sensational films that had been blocked from coming into the country for as long as twenty years flooded the theatres. Amidst this heterogeneous avalanche, titles as diverse as Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris*, Jaeckin's *Emmanuelle*, Rossif's *Mourir á Madrid*, and Pasolini's *Decamerone* were shown. This inundation made it extremely difficult for Spanish films to compete. In commercial terms they were unable to offer anything comparable to twenty years of world moviemaking. In order to alleviate the pressure from foreign competition, a screen quota of 2:1 was established (that is, 120 days each year were set aside for showing Spanish films in each theatre). Exhibitors opposed this measure because they were tied to multinational distributing interests. They therefore preferred importing films (especially American ones) and claimed that Spanish production was not on a large enough scale to fill the quota required by the new law. Producers, however, felt that a high protective quota was indispensable to encouraging local film production. Nevertheless, this measure

was not in itself sufficient to reverse the crisis in the Spanish film industry. The incredible rise in production costs made it imperative to try to expand the market for Spanish films, but in reality, only Carlos Saura's movies were regularly shown abroad. The dispute over quotas was finally resolved in January 1980, when a law was passed mandating that one Spanish film be shown for every three foreign films during each four-month period.

In spite of financial difficulties, Spanish filmmakers took advantage of the increased possibilities for free expression and began to diversify significantly in terms of genres. This diversification took place in the realm of escapist or entertainment movies as well as in that of serious "auteur" films. Eroticism was an important element in a number of libertine comedies with artistic pretentions, some of which imitated the style of Pasolini (for example Vincente Escrivá's *La lozana andaluza*, Antonio Mercero's *Las delicias de los verdes años*, Mariano Ozores' *Cuentos de las sábanas blancas*). In other cases, sexuality was the focus of a series of "dramas of denunciation" —films dealing with abortion, prostitution, or certain sexual abnormalities — subjects exploited by veteran filmmaker I.F. Iquino.

In the area of auteur films, certain movies that dealt with the Civil War and with the Franco regime marked Spain's recovery of historical memories and of political plurality, both of which had been outlawed by the dictatorship. Some of the movies in this group were actually begun during Franco's lifetime — as a result of the censorship of his *Canciones para después de una guerra* (1971), for example, those made by Basilio Martín Patino. Patino worked outside of the film industry, where he shot two movies in secret: *Queridísimos verdugos* (1973-76) and *Caudillo* (1974-77). Inspired by one of Daniel Sueiro's books on capital punishment, *Queridísimos verdugos* was filmed with the financial assistance of the Gulbenkian Foundation, in the *cinéma vérité* style. It contained interviews with three executioners who worked as employees in Spain's Justice Department. This moving document brought the *cinéma vérité* genre to prominence in Spain. Although it had been tried once before by Manuel Summers in *Juguetes rotos* (1966) *cinéma vérité* had long been unfeasible in Spain because of strict censorship which required that all screenplays be submitted and that all dialogue be cleared before shooting. With the easing of censorship a number of directors, including Jamie Chavarrí, Pere Portabella, Gonzalo Herralde, Ventura Ponsa, Jaime Camino, Abad de Santillán, and Imanol Uribe, were finally free to experiment with the *cinéma vérité* documentary sytle.

Patino's *Caudillo* was a compilation film which traced Franco's rise to power. In it, he was ironically portrayed as "a man set by God to save Spain." The film's best materials come from the archives of the German Tobis in Lisbon and from Movietone in London. Originally Patino planned to shoot a second part that would have begun at the end of the Civil War, but this idea was apparently abandoned. In addition to Patino, both Abad de Santilln and Jaime Camino undertook investigators of the Civil War through a series of interviews with important witnesses of that period. Abad de Santillán made *¿Por qué perdimos la guerra*, (1977), a somewhat propagandistic movie which expresses the director's anarchistic and anti-communist point of view. Jaime Camino's *La vieja memoria* is quite different in that it offers the most complete eyewitness account and the most complex exploration of the politics of both sides of the Civil War in Spanish film history.

The Civil War also provided the historical framework for Alfonso Ungría's *Soldados* (1978), inspired by Max Aub's novel *Las buenas intenciones*, but with little in the way of political analysis. An investigation into the private personality of Franco motivated Gonzalo Herralde to make *Raza, el espíritu de Franco*, which utilizes fragments of the epic film *Raza*, written under a pseudonym by Franco himself in 1941. The movie includes interviews with Franco's sister, Pilar Franco,

and with the actor who played the lead in the original film (Alfredo Mayo). Through this material, the fantasies and personal frustrations of the dictator are revealed.

The point of departure for several other movies was daily and political life under Franco. One of these, *La Rabia* by Eugeni Anglada (1978), chronicles the frustrations of a child. Another, a Franco-Spanish co-production entitled *Las rutas del sur*, which was directed by Joseph Losey from a script by Jorge Semprun, purports to be a sequel (and a poor one, at that) to Resnais's *La guerre est finie*. The Franco era was evoked in a new way by producer-turned-director José María Gonzalez Sinde in his comedy, *Viva La clase media*, which tells the story of the secret resistance of some middle-class people who were militants in the Communist Party under Franco. But the movies that evoke the Franco era in the most significant and meaningful ways are Jaime Chávarri's *El desencanto* (1976), Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón's *Sonámbulos* (1978), and *En el corazón del bosque* (1979), and Vicente Aranda's *La muchacha de las bragas de oro* (1980).

El desencanto is a magnificent exploration of the family of a renowned Franquist poet named Leopoldo Panero. Although he died in 1962, years later he continues to dominate his family. He is one of the ghosts who lives off the decomposing family unit, which is itself a mirror reflecting a more general crisis. Far different in tone is *La escopeta nacional*, set during a hunting party among the members of Spanish high society. The film takes the form of a "choral comedy," a penetrating account of the period at the end of Franco's reign. In it we see the moment in time when Franco was arbitrating in a power struggle between the Falange party and the Opus Dei, while idle members of the ruling classes took advantage of the situation and industrialists looked for political patronage in the hallways and backrooms of power. The same director, Luis Berlanga, made a sequel to this very successful movie that was not as well done; *Patrimonio nacional* (1981) is also a satire of the parasitic aristocracy of Madrid, which stars Luis Escobar, like the earlier movie. *Sonámbulos* on the other hand takes as its point of departure the trial against Basque militants which took place in Burgos in 1970. In hermetic fashion, and using the structure of a fantastic short story, it tells of a young girl who denounces her mother to the authorities, in spite of the fact that they are both members of a secret group that opposes the dictatorship.

Also faithful to the structure of fairy tales is *El corazón del bosque* (1979), in which Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón poetically recreates the plot of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, set among the anti-Franco guerilla groups, which were active in Asturias between 1942 and 1952. *El proceso de Burgos* (1980) is a feature-length documentary by a new Basque director, Imanol Uribe, which deals with the well-known trial in 1970 of sixteen ETA militants. This was a distrubing movie which did not receive the financial aid normally given by the Ministry of Culture. Finally, *La muchacha de las bragas de oro* (1980), a film by Vicente Aranda based upon Juan Marsé's prize-winning novel, evokes the past of the Franco era through a series of memories recalled by an old and disenchanted writer, a former member of the *Falange*, who manipulates his recollections so that in his imagination he is able to substitute pleasant images for unbearable past realities.

Political events marking the transition from dictatorship to democracy inspired several interesting movies. One of these is Pere Portabella's *Informe general* (1976) a documentary that covers the period up to the first legislative elections in which politicians of the anti-Franco opposition appear. The same desire to leave documentary evidence of this period can be found in *Después de...*(1977-1981), a fresco in two parts by Cecilia and José J. Bartolomé. In *Camada negra* (1977) Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón explores the behavior patterns of a Fascist family with a matriarchal structure. He focuses upon the period following the death of Franco when members of the family turn to terror-

ists acts. The plot revolves around the ritualistic initiation of the youngest brother into the clan's terrorist activities, an initiation that recalls the rites and rituals found in fairy tales. In *Arriba Hazaña!* José María Guiérrez uses a religious boarding school as the metaphor for a political microcosm in which the characters represent different social classes and subgroups during the complex period of reform following Franco's death. The setting of a religious school was also used by a new director, Antonio Hernández, in *F.E.N. (Formación del Espiritu Nacional, 1980)* a violent satire of religious education in Spain. Carlos Benpar's *El procedimiento* (1980), based on one of Jaime Fuster's novels, describes the experiences of a Catalan industrialist who becomes candidate for the Senate in the 1977 elections. By means of this plot, Benpar exposes a world of clandestine corruption and tax evasion, in a style that shows the influence of North American thrillers. The American influence can also be seen in *El crack* (1980), a movie by José Luis Garci that was inspired by the classic American *film noir* but with strong political connotations. And the actual killing of several Communists lawyers by gunmen of the extreme right in 1977 prompted Antonio Bardem to make *Siete dias de enero* (1979).

The process of recuperating collective memories long repressed led filmmakers to make movies evoking certain historical periods. These evocations helped Spaniards search for or strengthen their political and national identities. In this category belongs Antoni Ribas's ambitious social fresco *La ciutat cremada (La ciudad quemada)* (1976), spoken in Catalan. The movie begins in 1899, at the end of the Spanish colonial empire, and ends with workers' strikes during the so-called Tragic Week (1909). Although the movie is occasionally uneven in quality because of the difficult conditions under which it was shot, *La ciutat cremada* marks an important attempt at normalizing the use of Catalan — prohibited under Franco — in film production in Barcelona, an important movie center before the Civil War, which had suffered from the devastating effects of Franquist centralism.

In December 1975, the Institute of Catalan Film was established in Barcelona by Catalan film professionals. The goal was to promote the commercial and cultural development of the once-prosperous Catalan film industry. The Institute began by producing a series of bimonthly newsreels in Catalan starting in June 1977. These movies were successful and well-received. During the same period, other movies in Catalan appeared. Among them was *La oscura historia de la prima Montse* (1977) an adaptation of a Juan Marsé novel by Jordi Cadena, and Francesc Bellmunt's *L'orgia* (1978). A movie more ambitious in scope than the above-mentioned escapist films was Joseph Maria Form's *Companys: Proceso a Cataluña* (1979), a recreation of the last years of Lluis Companys, president of the autonomous Catalan government during the Republic and the Civil War, who was shot by Franco in 1940. In 1981 the Institute sponsored an experimental program of dubbing foreign films in Catalan.

Another movie that bears witness to the process of recovering past memories was Fernando Fernán Gomez's *Mi hija Hildegart* (1977), which evokes the Second Republic while telling the story of Hildegart Rodríguez, the young author of a book written during that period entitled, *La revolución sexual de la juventud*. She was assassinated by her mother in 1933. More important was *Pascual Duarte* (1976), in which director Ricardo Franco adapted Camilo José Cela's well-known novel, transforming it into a somewhat terse and harsh anthropological document on rural Spain. Franco focuses upon the instinctive rebelliousness of a young farmer living in underdeveloped Extremadura in the period before the War. At the end he is executed by garrotting (the censor cut part of this final scene). In *El caso Savolta* (1979), Antonio Drove adapts a novel by Eduardo Mendoza, a Spaniard currently residing in New York, and describes the violent social struggles that took place in Barcelona at the beginning of the century. But by far the most controversial movie to resurrect the past is

Pilar Miró's second film, *El crimen de Cuenca* (1979), based upon real events that took place in Osa de la Vega (Cuenca) in 1910 when two innocent men were accused of murdering someone. Because of the incredibly cruel torture inflicted upon them by the members of the *Guardia Civil*, the suspects pleaded guilty and were condemned to prison. Years later it was discovered that the supposed victim had not died but had gone to another village to live. When the film was completed in 1979, the Ministry of Culture refused to grant the license necessary for a public showing because of its graphic scenes of torture by the *Guardia Civil*. In February 1980, the movie was confiscated by military authorities and the director was prosecuted for "offenses against the *Guardia Civil*." The movie was shown at the Berlin Film Festival and finally, after a lengthy protest campaign by artists and intellectuals, a reform of the Military Code of Justice allowed the movie — and its director — to be released. It had its Spanish premiere in August 1981.

The freer atmosphere that slowly evolved after Franco's death resulted in the resurgence of an anarchistic kind of movie that had been an important part of popular Spanish culture before the war. In addition to having undeniable historic value, *Pascual Duarte* and *El caso Savolta* both contain a significant dose of this anarchistic spirit which drastically changed the way in which sexuality was treated on screen. This is also apparent in the first movie that Pilar Miró made after switching from television to film, *La petición* (1976), an adaptation of a short story by Zola. It can also be seen in the movie that she shot after *El crimen de Cuenca*, a semi-autobiographical work entitled *Gary Cooper que estás en los cielos* (1980), which recounts the loneliness of a professional woman. Nor was Pilar Miró the only woman who joined the ranks of movie directors during this period. Shortly after, Cecilia Bartolomé made a feminist work entitled *Vámonos, Bárbara* (1978).

Another movie in which sexuality is treated intelligently is *Bilbao*, shot by Bigas Luna in Catalan in 1978. This is one of the most personal films of the period, which details features of a strikingly neurotic world that would reappear in *Caniche* (1979). In the latter movie, the director explores an incestuous relationship between two siblings in a disturbing, claustrophobic atmosphere. (Bigas Luna then went to the U.S. to shoot *Reborn*.)[1]

The most significant aspect of this chapter in the history of Spanish film is that in a number of movies, one finds serious treatment of male homosexuality and transvestism for the first time. Among these films are Vicente Aranda's *Cambio de sexo* (1976), Eloy de Iglesia's *Los placeres ocultos* (1976) and *El diputado* (1978), Jaime Chavarri's *A un dios desconocido* (1977), Pedro Olea's *Un hombre llamado 'Flor de Otoño'* (1978), and Ventura Pon's *Ocaña, retrato intermitente* (1978), a *cinéma vérité* documentary on a transvestite painter. A similar transgression of moral taboos can also be seen in the documentary study *El asesino de Padralbes* (1978), another example of *cinéma vérité* by Gonzalo Herralde, which explores the personality of a homosexual murderer who has been condemned to death and imprisoned in Huesca prison. The tendency to undermine traditional values found in these movies even extended into the realm of conventional religious hagiography, as can be seen, for example, in Carles Mira's *La portentosa vida del Padre Vicente* (1978), a jocular demystification of Father Vicente's life and of the miracles attributed to him. In Valencia, homeland of this 14th Century saint, some people protested against the movie to the authorities.

In the realm of "auteur" films, producer Elías Querejeta has played an important role. He is the man responsible for the movies directed by Carlos Saura, our most prestigious director and the one who is best-known outside of Spain. Although Saura began to make movies in 1959, his works were not shown regularly abroad until he directed *Cría cuervos* (1975), which won the Grand Prize at the Cannes Film Festival. *Cría cuervos* offers a sen-

sitive portrayal of a child who is tormented by ghosts. The movie had an extraordinary international success and opened up foreign markets to Saura. His next film, *Elisa vida mía* (1976), was even more experimental in structure. It is a virtuouso exercise in circular narration along the lines of Borges or Cortázar, in which Saura describes the reunion of a father (Fernando Rey) and his daughter (Geraldine Chaplin), twenty years after the father has left his family and just before his death. Next came *Los ojos vendados* (1978), which explores the tactics and techniques of torture as practiced by dictators in Latin America. Against this background Saura probes the relationship between two lovers, played by José Luis Gómez and Geraldine Chaplin. In his next movie *Mamá cumple cien años* (1979) Saura moves away from the dramatic tone that had previously characterized his work and devises an allegorical and fantastic comedy in which he reintroduces characters who had figured in one of his earlier films, *Ana y los lobos*. He uses this format to comment upon behavior patterns typical of the Spanish bourgeoisie in the post-Franco era.

In addition to producing Saura's films, Elías Querejeta wrote the screenplay for *Las palabras de Max* (1978), directed by Emilio Martínez Lázaro (who was scriptwriter on *Pascual Duarte*). *Las palabras de Max* is a study of a writer's loneliness and nonconformity. The writer is played by a real sociologist, Ignacio Fernández Castro. The movie received a Golden Bear Award at the Berlin Film Festival, as did José Luis García Sánchez's *Las truchas* (1978) and Antonio Padrós's underground movie, *The Shirley Temple Story* (1977). This collective prize marked public recognition of the renovation that had taken place in Spanish film culture since the death of Franco. *Las truchas* is an unusual movie, somewhat in the tradition of Buñuel's *Exterminating Angel*. In a claustrophobic environment, we watch the members of a fishing club gather at a banquet to eat the trouts that they have caught. The fish turn out to be spoiled and this results in a general outbreak of food poisoning or intoxication. Situated midway between allegory and satire, *Las truchas* confirms the extent to which post-Franco cinema has become diversified and acquired new aims.

Another characteristic tendency in these movies has been a renewed interest in "costumbrista" or folklore comedies, which focus upon the mores of the younger generation in a spontaneous style reminiscent of the French *Nouvelle Vague* between 1960 and 1964. The first of these films was Fernando Colomo's *Tigres de papel* (1977), which describes the behavior and love conflicts of two young couples — members of the petite bourgeoisie living in Madrid during the months following Franco's death. Its documentary flavor, enhanced by extremely colloquial dialogue, made *Tigres de papel* new and appealing to audiences that saw themselves represented on the screen for the first time. Colomo repeated the formula with less success in *¿Qué hace una chica como túen un sitio como éste?* (1978). He also collaborated on the script of Miguel Angel Díez's *De fresa, limón y menta* (1977), which takes place in the late 1960s during the shooting of a film at the Official School of Cinematography of Madrid. This setting, very *Nouvelle Vague* in spirit, enabled Díez to express his ideas about filmmaking in general and his admiration for Godard in particular. Belonging to the same cycle of movies dealing with youthful mores and customs is *La orgía* (1978) which was filmed in 16 mm and in Catalan by Francesc Bellmunt. This current of filmmaking reached its peak in 1980 with the commercial success of *Opera prima* (1980), the first movie directed by the film critic for *El País*, Fernando Trueba. *Opera prima* is a youthful comedy of love and indifference. The film's protagonist and co-scriptwriter (Oscar Ladoire) received a prize at the Venice Film Festival. Trueba also worked as co-scriptwriter on Fernando Colomo's *film noir* comedy, *La mano negro* (1980).

A movie that contains elements associated with more traditional commercial comedies is J.A. Bar-

dem's *El Puente* (1976), in which an extremely popular comedian, Alfredo Landa, is used to transmit a political message. The film describes the political awakening of a worker when he goes on vacation to a fashionable beach resort at Torremolinos. In a strange movie entitled *Furia española*, director Francisco Betriu exhibits an exaggerated sense of the comic and deploys black humor to describe a lumpenproletariat section of Barcelona where everything hinges upon two collective obsessions: the love of soccer and repressed sexuality. Betriu's next movie, *Los fieles sirvientes* (1980), was a cooperative venture in which all those who worked on the movie participated, because of a general lack of funds in the film industry. *Los fieles sirvientes* is a satirical comedy inspired by Buñuel's humor which deals with the relationship between masters and servants in a middle-class family. Other interesting and successful comedies include *Pepi Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón* (1980), an unusual example of Spanish punk directed by Padro Almodóvar, and Carlos Mira's *Con el culo al aire* (1980), an outrageous comedy set in an insane asylum whose inmates are allegorical embodiments of aspects of Spain and Spanish history.

Because of the diversity of contemporary Spanish film, there are a number of movies, aside from those by Saura, that cannot be grouped together according to tendencies or genres. A good example of this diversity may be seen in Enrique Brasó's first feature-length movie, *In Memoriam* (1977), an adaptation of a brief story by the Argentine Adolfo Bioy Casares, *"En memoria de Paulina."* Just as atypical is Ricardo Franco's *Los restos del naufragio* (1978), the story of a young man (played by Franco himself) who is so disillusioned that he decides to retire to an old-age home. In addition to expressing a nostalgic longing for unrealized adventures, *Los restos del naufragio* dramatizes the disenchantment that comes from lost illusions, be they existential or political in nature. Jordi Felin's *Alicia en la España de las maravillas* (1978) offers an original and quite free interpretation of Lewis Carroll's story, converting it into an allegory of recent Spanish history.

The artistic rebirth of Spanish film took place between 1970 and 1978, a time of severe economic and industry-wide crisis when production costs tripled and the number of moviegoers declined, because of competition from other types of leisure activities (ranging from watching t.v. to taking week-end excursions). As a result, the number of movies produced fell off sharply in 1979:

Year	Spanish Film Productions	Co-productions	Total
1975	89	21	110
1976	90	18	108
1977	83	19	102
1978	77	30	107
1979	56	33	89

In analyzing these figures, we should note that a large number of coproductions included in this list were actually false coproductions; that is, wholly foreign movies that were filmed on Spanish soil. The 1979 crisis was so severe that in order to somewhat alleviate it, Spanish television announced in August that a budget of 1,300 million pesetas would be set aside for the production of television series and movies for t.v. using Spanish movie professionals and companies. This program was not actually implemented until 1981.

Spanish society was by then fully integrated into advanced industrialized society, and therefore receiving the positive as well as negative consequences of this integration, subject to the same pressures to consume and to compete, feeling the same stress, and exposed to similar ecological dangers. This was reflected in certain films which dealt with existential problems generated by the new social models and expressed the disillusionment with the democratic system that had begun to be felt. In *Las verdes praderas* (1979), José Luis Garci presented a comedy about upward mobility and opulence in late capitalist societies. The movie ends with an

improbable scene in which the protagonist (Alfredo Landa) burns down the country house that he had bought at great sacrifice. In *La campanada* (1980), Jaime Camino describes an executive in a multinational firm in the throes of an existential crisis. And in *Mater Amatísima* (1980), scripted by Bigas Luna, director Josep A. Salgot explores the drama of a single parent living with her small autistic child, against a background of a highly technical society.

A number of movies also presented the opposite of neocapitalist opulence and focused with characteristic virtuosity upon marginal groups living in ghettoes. In *Maravillas* (1981), Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón depicts the poetic universe of social alienation, while in *De prisa, de prisa* (1981) Carlos Saura portrays the behavior of marginal and delinquent young people living in the suburbs of Madrid. In this movie he utilizes a documentary style, reminiscent of, although more despairing and pessimistic than, his first movie, *Los golfos* (1959). Also in 1981, Saura filmed a ballet rehearsal of *Bodas de sangre*, in which the company of dancer Antonio Gades adapts Garcia Lorca's famous tragedy for the stage.

In the area of offbeat or unusual movies, special mention should be made of Ivan Zulueta's *Arrebato* (1980), one of the very few truly experimental movies to have been made in Spain. This is an intelligent psychic study of split personality (inspired by E.A. Poe) along with an exploration of the lifestyles of members of the counterculture who are involved in psychedelic experiences and in underground filmmaking. At the opposite pole from this avant-garde statement is José Luis Borau, who, after the success of his rural drama *Furtivos* (1975), returned to an old Spanish narrative tradition in a Swedish coproduction entitled *La Sabina* (1980). This is a romantic trip through timeless rural mythology. This stimulating contrast between experimentalism and traditional romanticism exemplifies the artistic variety and vitality of Spanish film, which is surviving and affirming Spanish cultural identity in spite of adverse economic conditions.

Translated by Lillian Manzor-Coats and Katherine S. Kovács

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NOTES

[1]The United States has exerted a strong pull on young Spanish filmmakers, in part because of the possibilities that it offers for worldwide film distribution. In addition to *Reborn*, filmed in Houston by Bigas Luna, there is also *Jet Lag* (1980), a coproduction shot in New York by Gonzalo Herralde, and *Angeles Gordos* (1980), a comedy directed by Manuel Summers in Los Angeles. At this writing Ricardo Franco is involved in a project with Anthony Quinn and José Luis Borau is filming *Rio Abajo* in Laredo, Texas.

3

Manuel Gutiérrez Aragon and Jose Luis Borau during the shooting of *Camada Negra (Black Brood)*

4

Joaquin Hinojosa and Jose Luis Alonso in *Camada Negra* (1977)

5

Angelina Molina in *El Corazon del Bosque (In the Heart of the Forest)* (1978)

6

Cristina Marcos in *Maravillas* (1980)

7

8

El Crimen de Cuenca (1979)

9

Pilar Miró, director of *El Crimen de Cuenca* and Spain's General Director of Cinematography

"I Am Ana": The Play of the Imagination in *The Spirit of the Beehive*

Luis O. Arata

It is a preconception to think we can determine what motivates the actions of a person. It is also a preconception to believe the past can be recaptured and reconstructed somehow as it was. Any reconstruction, whether psychological or historical, can only begin by discarding what is irrelevant to the purpose of the reconstruction. But there is another type of incursion into the past, one which does not seek to reconstruct, but rather remains open to the play of the imagination as it would have taken place in that past. *The Spirit of the Beehive* of Víctor Erice is a film fully engaged in the second type of incursion, resulting in one of the most striking portrayals of a child's mind.

Erice at first conceived *The Spirit of the Beehive*, in one of its several drafts, as a work of remembrance. A protagonist named Ana would return to her native town for the burial of her father. This homecoming would trigger in her mind the reconstruction of episodes from her childhood which in turn would have become the film.[1]

One month before the filming started, Erice did away with the character of Ana as an adult and retained only the child. Erice shifted the entire point of view of the film from Ana as an adult remembering her past to Ana as a child living that past as a present. In an effort to simplify the filming process, Erice moved the narrative point of view from past to present and from adult to child.

A rather small change in Erice's script produced in effect a radical change of the film's point of view and turned *The Spirit of the Beehive* into the haunting exploration of a child's world. Erice faced, however, the very difficult task of having to convey through the film the spirit of the child, something far more difficult to grasp than that of the adult imagining childhood. He succeeded brilliantly.

The Spirit of the Beehive invites the viewer to

explore from a child's perspective, rather than remember the past from an adult point of view. The film is set in Hoyuelos, a small town in Castilla, Spain. The year is 1940. Ana, who is about seven years old, lives with her slightly older sister Isabel and her parents Fernando and Teresa, in a large house which used to be luxurious but at the moment is only sparsely furnished and in a general state of disrepair.

The film does not reveal much of the parents' life. Their private existence largely escapes Ana's vision. Fernando maintains beehives and studies the behavior of bees. In the office, he keeps a beehive specially designed for observation.

Teresa writes letters to an unspecified person and mails them to the International Red Cross in France. She asks this person to write soon so that at least she would know if he is still alive. Teresa as well as Fernando remain like shadows wandering through an empty house, a small town, and a barren landscape.

Erice avoided making any direct statements about the post civil war Spain of 1940. Nevertheless, the desolation of the parents' lives and their environment reveals scars left by the war. Erice noted:

> Sometimes I think that for those whose childhood contained an inherent vacuum, for those of us born immediately after a civil war like ours, the elders were often just that: a vacuum, an absence. Those who were there, were there and they were not. And why were they not there? Because they had died, left, or else become self-centered beings, radically deprived of their most elemental means of expression. Having finished with what they considered to be a nightmare, many returned to their homes, had children, but something remained ingrained in them, something deeply mutilated which reveals an absence.[2]

It is this desolate environment which serves as playground for Ana and Isabel. The two sisters are first seen in the film as spectators during a projection of James Whale's film *Dr. Frankenstein*, with Boris Karloff playing the role of the monster.

Sections of Whale's film are shown within *The Spirit of the Beehive*, including the scene where the monster encounters a little girl by the river. The girl is not afraid but gives the monster some of the daisies she holds. Both proceed to throw the flowers into the river, one by one, and watch them float. The next scene included in Erice's film shows a man carrying the dead body of the little girl—his daughter.

A simple plot starts to unfold at this moment. Ana asks her sister why the monster killed the little girl and why was he later killed. Isabel, feigning special knowledge of the matter, tells Ana that neither the girl nor the monster died. She claims to have seen the monster nearby. Ana asks if he is a ghost, to which Isabel replies that the monster is not a ghost but a spirit. She tells Ana that if she wants to talk to the monster she must be friendly towards him, close her eyes and say "I am Ana, I am Ana."

Among the places where the sisters play is an abandoned hut near a railroad track. One day a man jumps from a passing train and hides in the hut. He has been wounded in the ankle and carries a pistol. Ana finds him and secretly brings him clothes and food.

The fugitive is killed one night by the local police. It is discovered he was wearing clothes belonging to Ana's father. Ana finally learns from her father that the man was killed, and she immediately runs away.

Her father and persons from the town organize search parties to find the missing girl. The action shifts to a scene at night in a forest. Ana tries to avoid being found by the search teams and comes to a river bathed in moonlight. The monster created by Dr. Frankenstein appears to her for the first time as if in answer to her call. Like the girl in Whale's film, Ana is not afraid and does not run away.

In the next scene it is already dawn. Fernando and other villages find Ana and bring her home where she gradually recovers from what is diagnosed as a strong emotional shock.

The film ends with Ana waking up at night. She goes to an open window bathed in moonlight and stares towards the darkness. One hears what seems to be her mind calling, "I am Ana."

The plot in *The Spirit of the Beehive* serves, however, a secondary role as element of the film. It is there as an excuse for the play of Ana as well as for providing a definite sense of narrative unity and continuity.

But the substance of the film is not in the narrative to any major extent. It is mainly contained in the play of Ana and Isabel within a desolate and silent environment. The contrast between the barren setting and the richness of Ana's imagination is extraordinary. It harmonizes with the play of light and darkness throughout the film, reminiscent of the style of Zurbarán.

Erice chose Ana Torrent to play the role of Ana. Her big soft black eyes seem to be open windows into her mind where much of *The Spirit of the Beehive* actually takes place.

Three years after acting in Erice's film, Ana Torrent played a central role in Carlos Saura's *Cría cuervos.* In Saura's film, she portrays a somewhat older child also named Ana. But contrary to Erice's Ana, the child of *Cría cuervos* is no longer passive and playful. Saura's Ana is actively engaged in trying to shape her environment. The differences between the two girls played by Ana Torrent serve to underline the area where Erice's film excels: namely, the portrayal of a child's playful exploration of her environment.

In *Cría cuervos,* Saura adopted the point of view of an adult Ana remembering events from her childhood—the point of view also initially chosen by Erice but later discarded. The Ana presented in *Cría cuervos* is one whose play is controlled by the efforts of an adult person trying to reconstruct past events. The adult mind of Saura's Ana selects from her memories what she wishes to remember in order to build a story centered around the death of her mother.

Jean Piaget has shown that a person remembers what he has seen as he understands it and not as he has lived it. Remembrances are shaped then by a cognitive structure and do not clearly reflect the entire perception of the remembered moments. There are no such things as pure memories of entire episodes. The past is reconstructed as a function of the present: The differences between the moment as lived and as remembered can be greatly accentuated with time, particularly as the cognitive structures of the person change.

Piaget offers a striking example from his own childhood about the difference between a lived and a remembered moment. One of his most vivid memories is when as a very young child he was the object of an attempted kidnapping. His nurse scuffled with the kidnapper who then fled empty-handed. Piaget remembers the kidnapper as if the incident had just happened. Yet, when he was fifteen, the nurse confessed she had invented the kidnapping story for the recognition and reward she would get. Piaget's entire memory, so vivid in his mind still, had actually not taken place, but resulted from hearing the tale from the nurse. The child's mind actually did not realize the incident was fabricated.[3]

As extreme as the example may be, it illustrates the fact that memories are a function of a cognitive structure which "makes sense" of the experiences. Since the child's cognitive structures are in a process of growth and development, so is his sense of memory, also a cognitive structure.

The child's cognitive structures develop through accommodation and through assimilation in relation to what is experienced. These are complementary processes. Through accommodation the child tends to imitate and modify his structures so as to fit the ones he perceives outside of himself. Through assimilation the child transforms what he perceives so that it can be apprehended without

altering by much his cognitive structures. This second process is called play.

For the young child, moments of unguided perceptions, passive moments in a cognitive sense, are moments of play. There could hardly be a detailed memory of such moments since the child does not attempt to make sense out of the experiences. Perception and imagination become the same when the mind enters the realm of play, just as in the case of Piaget's kidnapping.

It is Erice's great talent to have been able to capture and communicate to the spectator those moments when the child's imagination is at play. A remarkable scene in *The Spirit of the Beehive* takes place as Ana and Isabel play by the railroad track. They await the arrival of the train and anticipate it by listening to the noise transmitted by the tracks. Isabel announces the approach of the train. The camera does not show the train but focuses instead on Ana looking towards the camera placed on the tracks between her and the approaching train. The sound of the train grows louder. Isabel moves away from the tracks to watch the train go by. Ana, however, remains motionless staring at the coming train. It is at this moment of growing tension that her mind starts to play with the unknown and the spectator is drawn into Ana's play.

During the few seconds between the moment Ana seems to fall into a hypnotic trance and the moment when she finally jumps off the tracks, drawn away from the trance by her sister's call, the viewer and Ana enter into a rapid play of mental exploration and questioning based on what Ana might be seeing: a locomotive, a monster, the approach of death, a projection of herself, something unknown, both friendly and deadly, coming to greet her.

There are other moments of similar intensity in Erice's film. They occur when Ana looks down into a deep, dark well by the abandoned hut, or when she looks out her window into the garden bathed in moonlight. Nothing happens during any of these charged moments, nothing moves, nobody speaks. Yet the spectator is given a glimpse of Ana's imagination. The viewer's mind is drawn to double during those moments the play of the child's imagination.

What Erice's film loses in clarity, it gains by the strong imprint that such moments leave in the viewer's mind. The static images of Ana staring at the coming train, looking into the well or towards the garden in the night, are remembered by the spectator not only as visually stunning, but also as enigmatic and dynamic since they call the viewer's imagination into play. The fact that the images do not lead to a narrative resolution engraves them even more in the viewer's mind, since they remain as pictorial mysteries to which the viewer can return without exhausting their haunting power of suggestion.

The role of Ana in *Cría cuervos*, as the projection of an adult's recollections, no longer can have the playful freshness of Erice's Ana. The adult mind projects specific images into the mind of the child she remembers in an attempt to reconstruct past episodes. The profound difference between the two points of view becomes clear in scenes where the child looks at something and imagines. In *Cría cuervos*, Ana's view produces clear images. In Erice's film, however, Ana's gaze reveals nothing concete. The spectator is only shown Ana's eyes looking, and nothing more. The play of a child's imagination does not produce an immediate memory. It was Erice's great skill to present this as a visual fact.

Except when hallucinating or dreaming, such as the moment when Erice's Ana sees the monster of Dr. Frankenstein coming to her, a child's imagination does not produce distinct pictures of what goes on in the mind. The play of the imagination in children tends to remain ambivalent, fluid, open, because for the child it is not clear what he is playing with. The child has not yet developed the structures that would later turn the world into a space of knowledge and memories.[4]

Cría cuervos, nevertheless, also has its haunting images. The central figure of those moments, however, is no longer Ana but her mother, played by Geraldine Chaplin. Ana as adult can project images into the remembrances of herself as a child. Yet she cannot resolve certain images of her mother, particularly when she saw her lying in bed dying.

With the power of an etching by Goya, the dying mother repeats to herself lying in bed with wide open eyes, driven by pain practically beyond her senses: "There is nothing," "They lied to me," "I don't want to die."[5] Ana, attracted by her mother's voice, wanders into the room. The mother and the daughter are alone. Ana walks slowly and comes close to her mother. Soon the mother's vision falls upon Ana. It is not clear if she recognizes her daughter, but she does remain silent for an instant, staring towards Ana with wide open eyes. Suddenly the intensity of that brief static moment becomes unfathomable. The spectator's mind enters the open play of the imagination of the mother and the daughter, both facing the unknown at the same time.

Cría cuervos remains, nevertheless, a narrative film in structure and content. Its details are there out of a narrative necessity. A narrative structure goes well, after all, with the structure of remembrance. Both are based on a logic, on an understanding of the materials presented or recalled. In Erice's film, however, most episodes are irrelevant in terms of the development of an action, yet these episodes are the ones with most impact. This harmonizes very well with the fact that the film's point of view is that of Ana as a child. The focus of a child's mind is dominated by curiosity but not in a cognitive sense, and so is the general focus of *The Spirit of the Beehive*. The film pays little attention to a number of actions or situations that could have otherwise been developed: who was the mother writing to? what is the relationship between the parents? why is the environment so desolate? who was the fugitive and why was he killed? These questions escape Ana's mind. Instead, much of the film deals with the sisters playing under various circumstances.

The questions that concern Ana do not call for logical answers. They function as invocations to summon forth whatever is out there which she does not know. But the unknown never reveals itself as such to Ana. She can only attempt to experience it in the dangerous approach of a locomotive, within the depths of a well, contained in a poisonous mushroom that Fernando showed her, and by invoking the monster.

An essential question is posed, however, in *The Spirit of the Beehive*. It is the same one the caterpillar asked Alice during her adventures in Wonderland: "Who are you?" Erice's film plays with Ana's answer to this question: "I am Ana." What could such an answer ever mean to the young child?

It is first her sister Isabel who tells Ana to use the phrase "I am Ana" to invoke the spirit of the monster. But as the film concludes with Ana staring out into the dark garden in moonlight, repeating to herself "I am Ana," it becomes evident that what the invocation in effect summons forth is not the monster but Ana herself.

Unknowingly, Ana becomes engaged in a process of self-discovery. By exploring her environment Ana is actually realizing her own nature. Her sister Isabel becomes a guide in Ana's journey of discovery. Yet Isabel is not aware of the deep significance of Ana's behavior, nor does she understand her own role in Ana's world. Isabel does not engage in the rich play of the imagination so natural to her younger sister. She plays instead an adult role, feigning to know what Ana ignores. Nevertheless Isabel senses at times the intensity of Ana's play. She is puzzled somewhat by her sister, yet cannot open herself to the simplicity and intensity of Ana's actions.

Pure play, that is to say play that remains open, not bound by rules of games, is a process of exploration through which the player, child or adult, assimilates the object of play. Matter, persons, concepts are ingested, so to speak, through this process of play. They are incorporated into the player's own world. But this process of assimilation also changes the player. He is transformed by that which he embraces. The magic and power of pure play lies in the fact that the person is reflected in the stuff with which he plays. It is in this sense that the play of Ana becomes a process of exploration, of self-discovery, of self-creation.

The alchemist is a perfect player. His true objective is not the production of gold but the spiritual better-

ment achieved through the search for transmuting metal into gold. Child's play is, in a similar way, also a process where the apparent object of the activity is not all that important. Even games are no longer played but are actually executed when they are performed not for the sake of playing but for winning or reaching a preconceived objective. What becomes essential in play is the process of self-discovery. Unknowingly, Ana is the perfect alchemist.

It may be appropriate to call the maker of *The Spirit of the Beehive* an alchemist as well. Erice is less concerned with a product than with a process. The making of *The Spirit of the Beehive* involved a continuous process of exploration and change which started with the approval of a project to do a film on the subject of Frankenstein.

The final version of the script was inspired by a photo from James Whale's film, showing the moment of the encounter between the monster and the little girl. Such a powerful image with its charge of silence foreshadows the static moments in Erice's film where Ana faces the unknown in the shape of a locomotive, a deep well, a poisonous mushroom, a monster, or an open window on a dark garden.

Erice remained open to changing the script and the order of shooting sequences during the filming process. He wished to be able to incorporate in the work new possibilities that could arise during the shooting, particularly when working with children. The film does show a spontaneity in the children's acting that could only have been inspired by them on location—a spontaneity which Erice was fortunate and skillful to capture.

With only one major film produced, Víctor Erice has emerged as a highly creative Spanish filmmaker. It is not a credit to the Spanish film industry, however, that he has not been able to start working on a new film until now, nine years after the completion of *The Spirit of the Beehive* in 1973.[6]

The Spirit of the Beehive is a film that remains as enigmatic as its title. Yet it is refreshing and mysterious in a playful way, not imposing on the viewer's imagination than an invitation to share in Ana's play. Erice has created a work that is Spanish in character and also political without openly wishing to be either. His film is unassuming, but its charm and impact stem from that simplicity contained in every aspect of the film.

Erice's film is simple, yet it is rich in details and overabundant in seemingly superfluous material. But from the child's perspective, which the work playfully adopts, every detail acquires an almost magical importance. Erice harmonized all elements to reveal a child asking to herself, "Who am I?", and a barren environment to answer back, charged with the rich echoes of her imagination.

Luis Arata is the author of The Festive Play of Fernando Arrabal. *He is the director of Paradox Studio Theatre and author of* The Temptation, Variations on a Breakfast, *and other plays.*

NOTES

[1]See the interview with Víctor Erice contained in *El espíritu de la colmena* (Madrid: Eilas Querejeta Ediciones, 1976) by Víctor Erice and Angel Fernández Santos. The book contains the film's script.

[2]*El espíritu de la colmena*, p. 144. The translation is my own.

[3]Jean-Claude Bringuier, *Conversations with Jean Piaget* (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1980), pp. 119-21.

[4]For more information on the notion of play see Jean Piaget, *Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood* (New York: Norton, 1962). For a discussion of play in connection with literature and theatre, see Luis Arata, *The Festive Play of Fernando Arrabal* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1982).

[5]*L'Avant-Scène du cinéma*, No. 214 (October 1978), 16. The translation is my own.

[6]Erice shot his next movie *El Sur* (The South) on location in Castilla and especially in Andalucia, in a town outside of Sevilla in 1982. It was shown at the Cannes Film Festival and at the Festival of Spanish films held in New York in 1983.

10

Ana Torrent and Isabel Telleria in *Spirit of the Beehive* (1973)

11

Carlos Saura: Constructive Imagination in Post-Franco Cinema

Marvin D'Lugo

Carlos Saura is a master of the reflective mode in Spanish cinema.[1] Through a combination of virtuoso film technique and equally imaginative plot construction he brings his audience to ponder the tragic contradictions which have shaped their culture. Yet curiously, Saura carefully frames such confrontations within the immediate and even self-referential context of cinematic practices. He is not a solipsistic director in the conventional sense, and yet his art might appropriately be called self-conscious. That is to say that he is insistently moved by the possibility of awakening in his audience, through the material elements of film representation, an awareness of their position within the constraints of a society built upon illusionism.

Saura's unique conceptual talent as an author arises from the lessons he learned during the years he was forced to struggle against the restrictive practices of the censor-controlled franquista film industry. He gradually learned to absorb the codes of permissible representation, and to deploy these same codes within his works as the basis of a critique of the dominant ideology. We need to see the essence of Saura's art as an exploration of alternative practices, interventions both in cinema and culture, which seek to disengage the spectator from illusion. Such strategies are rooted in Saura's treatment of cinematic practices as quintessentially social practices, film as an institution constituting only part of a larger ideological enterprise to which any critique of society must be directed. Thus, the sense of the broader cultural interrogations which emerge from Saura's films become part of a meta-cinematic system and it is that system which needs to be understood in the process of grasping the meanings of any of his films.

He defines the tension of each film as a dialectic between cinematic representation and specularization; that is, between the systems of social positioning of individuals in culture as depicted on screen, and the strategies which the director employs to bring his audience to grasp the ideolog-

ical values of such positioning. Saura's recognition of the film as an object in culture leads inevitably to his treatment of the spectator as a subject in culture. It is that subject who increasingly becomes the center of Saura's inquiry.

I do not mean to suggest a sociological notion of the spectator, but rather a narrative-visual figure, a character who, as the agency of narration within a film, embodies the habits of sight and consciousness which reflect the perceptual features of the real spectator. This character explicitly locates the story of each film as an "object" in an imaginative space on screen that he, as narrator, shares with the real spectator. In this way, each film ceases to be merely the critique of a fraudulent world and becomes the critique of the patterns of perception which have determined the individual's acquiescence to fraudulence.

Nick Browne calls such a figure the "spectator-in-the-text" and describes it as a rhetorical device used to secure the film's narrative illusion :

> The spectator's place, the locus around which the spatial/temporal structures of presentation are organized, is a construction of the text which is ultimately the product of the narrator's disposition toward the tale. Such structures, which in shaping and presenting the action prompt a manner and indeed a path of reading, convey and are closely allied to the guiding moral commentary of the text.[2]

Within these structures we find that the spectator's scopic engagement with the filmic illusion has been defined in more active terms, that he has been given a perceptual role linked to the special project of the narration. In the four films which Saura makes immediately following Franco's death this narrational strategy proves particularly illuminating. Addressing himself to the nature of the protagonists in these four films, Saura calls them demonstrations of a "constructive imagination.[3]" They are conceived as ways of sharing with the spectator strategies of lucidity with which to confront the legacy of the old illusionism which, even after Franco's death, holds sway over individual consciousness. He describes what he sees as the predicament of Spanish culture after Franco's death:

> I believe we live immersed in a society which has been built up upon an accumulation of errors. Some of these errors, I have no doubt, can be rectified. From that fact comes my reasoned optimism in the future, starting with the base of where we are now. But other errors, fundamental ones are in the roots of our evolution...We are products of a repressive education which has left us disarmed and defenseless in the fact of many things.[4]

Saura's "reasoned optimism" leads him to develop a cycle of four films which comprise a single conceptual project: demystifying the spectator's regressive education; making him confront the old habits of sight which have shaped his consciousness and disavow them; finally, bringing the spectator to contemplate the possibility of the future both in individual and social terms. To understand these works within the system each film defines as its own "reading," we need to come to grips with Saura's subjective spectator inscriptions as these are shaped by narrational strategies.

Cría!

In conspicuous ways *Cría* raises for the spectator the question which dominates Saura's films for the rest of the decade following Franco's death: What does the future hold for Spaniards beyond *franquismo?* There is, for instance, a key scene early in the film depicting the wake held for a military officer which inevitably evokes the death of Franco.[5] The rest of the film dramatizes the plight of the officer's nine-year-old daughter as she confronts her past and the void of her future.

Ana, blaming her mother's illness and death on her father, now concludes that the mysterious

powder she placed in his milk on the night he died killed him. As the film opens, we see her disposing of the milk glass. But her sense of having rid herself of the pain and tyranny of her father's presence continues. Her Aunt Pauline comes to set the house in order, turning out to be every bit the authoritarian Ana's father had been. In the days that follow her father's wake, Ana remains tortured by the memories of her mother's illness. Thus the film progresses as a radical juxtaposition of the memories of the past and the isolation and confinement Ana feels in the present.

What makes the film so notable is its development of a unique visual structure which interrogates the significance of the historical moment. Saura structures the film around a specular project within which the viewer is made to discern his own psychic and perceptual features in the figure of the nine-year-old spectator-in-the-text. Through the course of the narration, the film posits a number of perspectival repositionings which eventually bring the spectator to move beyond the constraints of contemporary visual and social illusion.

As the on-screen subject, Ana stands back from her life and contemplates not so much her own identity as the world that is pressing in on that identity. Unlike earlier Saura protagonists, she sees herself from more than one perspective. There appear to be at least two temporal vantages through which the film is articulated. One is the immediate present moment, 1975; the other, a hypothetical position twenty years into the future when Ana is a grown woman of twenty-nine. The film dramatizes on these two levels the way in which the individual represents herself and accounts in her own mind for the totality of her experiences. Through such a strategy Saura raises for his spectator a hitherto unexplored range of questions of subject positionality in terms of historical consciousness.

Our placement with Ana as the frame of narration is secured early on through a series of point-of-view shots in which we are brought to identify with her glance as the principal internal narrative authority of the film. Gradually, her point of view is brought into question as we recognize the shifts in her consciousness as she weaves personal memories with childish fantasies and the curious perception of herself from a future vantage. We are, in fact, made quickly aware of the instability of the narrational structure and must continually reposition ourselves before a visual field which appears to lack temporal stability. These problems of narration force the spectator to reflect in his own mind on the internal logic of the film's imagery and the effects of such imagery on the assumed place of coherence which the narrative film is said to construct for its viewer.

Questions of subject positioning lie at the very root of Saura's conception of *Cría!* The film owes its creation to Saura's reflection on the final images of his previous film, *Cousin Angelica*, where a mother is seen combing the hair of her daughter before a mirror. Lina Canalejas, who plays Angelica's mother in the 1936 sequence of the film, also plays the role of the adult Angelica in 1973. Picking up on the visual ambiguity of past and present in the scene, Saura builds the plot of *Cría!* around the problems of reading the meaning of such an image in distinct time frames. The same hair-combing scene is recreated in *Cría!* with Geraldine Chaplin seen grooming the hair of her nine-year-old daughter, Ana, in a bathroom mirror. Geraldine Chaplin also plays the role of Ana as a woman in 1995. When the future frame is introduced after the hair-combing scene, the spectator is led to reconstruct the narrative as a flashback from the perspective of the adult Ana. Such visual snares raise for the spectator the continuing dilemma of perceptual self-placement, a dilemma which is mirrored in the situation of the nine-year-old Ana.

A number of other scenes transpose the self-reflexive question of our placement in relation to the film to the context of social positioning of individuals depicted within the action. In one sequence, for instance, we see Ana's older sister, Irene, pasting magazine photos of popular singers

and models into a scrapbook, absorbing in this way the place in the adult world defined for her by social representation. In the very next scene we see the children's grandmother, paralyzed and mute, moved to where she can view a bulletin board where the children have tacked the postcards and photographs which remind her of her youth.

The narrative structure of *Cría!* operates precisely around this tension between two opposing uses of images as they reflect a human destiny. One is the individual's absorption of the socially defined placements constructed for her; the other, a passive recognition that all that remains from such a socially prescribed existence are hollow memories. Together, Irene and her grandmother dramatize the dilemma forming in Ana's mind. She is confronted with the images from her past, which she disavows, and equally distressing images of a vague future in which she feels herself abandoned. Her evolving consciousness as a perceptually innocent subject provokes in her a tacit inquiry into the ways in which she can break out of the snares she identifies with both her family and her present condition as orphan.

Ana is the first of Saura's on-screen spectators to fully asume the role of active interrogator of her visual environment. Her precocious curiosity in questioning the adult world is ironically paired with an ingenuous acceptance on her part of the validity of a world she sees with her own eyes. Earlier, in *Cousin Angelica,* Saura had characterized Luis as a childlike figure. In *Cría!,* by reversing this pattern, he gives special emphasis to the significance of Ana's condition of innocence, particularly what we must recognize as her perceptual naiveté. Ana's ingenuous look, the nondistinction between what she sees and the as yet undeveloped awareness of the ways in which she sees, is ultimately the source of her captivity within her family and within the world controlled by adults. Her narration specifies this dilemma of perception for the spectator as a simple problem of temporal incoherence. Thus the spectator, during a number of sequences, is made to share Ana's plight cinematically. The text prefigures the resolution of Ana's dilemma as the eventual achievement of a mature temporal consciousness. In doing so it is really positioning the spectator to assume a similar consciousness.

Progressively, we are put at an advantage over Ana in that we are able both to recognize the symptomatic qualities of Ana's perception through narrative contradiction and to project possible resolutions. At convenient points in the narration we are provided with placements which offer us a coherence over the limits of Ana's point of view: a distanced shot of the house as viewed from atop a building; the flashback on present-day events from the vantage of the future. While stabilizing our view on the narrative, these points also define the place of illumination to which Ana, in her own psychic crisis, must eventually move. She needs to be displaced from her family which she recognizes as the source of her imprisonment; to assume a poition of control over adults; finally, to somehow end her entrapment in the defenseless body of a child. These are solutions which Ana herself senses and which, in the fantasy of her own mind, she has already achieved. But what she cannot see, what the spectator is gradually positioned to grasp, is that Ana also needs a conceptual vantage from which she can recognize the contradictions which plague her perception and lock her into a series of static positions either in the present or the past.

The final major sequence of the film provides her with a contemplative shock which will expose for her the errors upon which her entire consciousness is founded. She awakens on the first day of school to discover that her aunt has not died from the powder which Ana had imagined to be her magical poison, the same powder with which she had believed she had murdered her father. The shock of her aunt's appearance provides Ana with access to a new level of consciousness. It effectively invalidates the illusion of Ana's patricide upon which, from the first scene of the film, Ana's image of

herself and our ingenuous image of her have been based. This is a point of personal illumination which will necessarily have other resonances in Ana's psyche.

The contemplative shock Ana experiences is joined with a suggestion of future growth as she is seen in the final scene of the film leaving the house with her sisters en route to school. This scene of departure symbolizes Ana's abandonment of all the structures which have entrapped her. Despite the fact that she is visually identified with her two sisters in this last scene, the narrative has brought the spectator to recognize that only Ana, of the three, has achieved true growth, not in outward appearance, but in perceptual consciousness. An essential process of learning has begun for her. It is a process of growth beyond the confinement of the past. Importantly, Ana's achievement of perceptual consciousness has already been prefigured by the spectator's own repositioning, his ability now to read meanings into the social and perceptual positionings within actions.

The spectator's scopic urge—his habit of merely looking at things—has gradually shifted to a specular activity, looking at the habits of sight which have determined his position within a repressive social order not unlike Ana's. As the surrogate of the real spectator, Ana has defined for him the possibility of moving beyond the static past by the force of her own creative imagination. The future frame of 1995 is now recognized only as a projection of such possibilities. But the enduring source of a creative imagination is that first recognition by the bearer of the look of the contradictions inherent in his own way of seeing. Out of that illumination of perceptual placement which shapes consciousness comes the spectator's and the character's ability to project the possibility of a regeneration beyond the constraints of the past.

Elisa, My Love

If *Cría!* worked as an imaginative response for the individual to the immediate fact of a world whose center appeared lost with the death of Franco, Saura, in his next film, recognizes, for himself at least, that with Franco's death, he had become freed of certain "moral obligations".[6] He turns his attention precisely to the question of spiritual regeneration beyond the confines of social reality. The central character of *Elisa, My Love* (1977) is an aging school teacher who, in the face of imminent death, begins to compose a personal memoir, narrating his life, not in a conventional manner, but from the point of view of his daughter, Elisa, whom he has not seen in twenty years. This imaginative displacement of the narrator's perspective to the perspective of his daughter implies a sense of temporal consciousness, not unlike the pattern we noted in *Cría!* Saura here again equates spiritual regeneration with social generations. Speaking of the odd relation of the father to his daughter, he says: "In a certain fashion the death of Luis is the birth of Elisa. We build our personalities on the ruins of our predecessors. Thus Elisa grows out of an antecedent experience, that of her father, and it is through that experience that her identity is organized and reinforced".[7]

The rhetorical project of the film is really to bring the spectator to an identification with and an understanding of the liberating consciousness which is Luis's constructive imagination. The material practices of filmic representation — imagery, narration, even plotting — are constructed to advance that project. Plot, perhaps the most elusive of the film's effects, works to dramatize that identification through the story of Elisa's perspectival and spiritual regeneration. On a simple level, the film appears to be Elisa's story: the story she seems to be telling; the story of her re-encounter with her father. Within the elaboration of that story we come to recognize that she serves a mediating function between our own point of view and Luis's, for while she is the narrational subject, she is also the object of our attention.

Through flashbacks, dreams, and dramatizations of personal fantasies, the elements of Elisa's story unfold. After a lapse of twenty years she has been reunited with her father. She discovers a common thread in the pattern of their separate lives: each has had a failed marriage; each is obsessed with the idea of death, although for different reasons. Gradually, Luis's spirit of repose begins to strengthen his daughter and she finds the courage to make the definitive break with her husband. As in *Cria!*, marriage and family are identified as the structures which entrap the individual within false consciousness.

In the final sequence of the film, Luis's illness worsens and Elisa goes in his place as director of a religious play Luis had earlier rehearsed with his class at the nearby church school. When she returns to her father's cottage, she finds him dead. In the final images of the film she begins to read lines from her father's memoir, perhaps to continue writing it herself.

What throws into question any possibility of a simple reading of the film is a series of displacements and projections of action which arise out of the ambiguous frame of Luis's narration. Not only does Luis occupy contradictory positions as the real subject and object of his own story, but the conjunction of a spoken and visualized narration rooted in his memoir creates a dialectical tension between the film's visual and verbal codes. Tellingly, this dialectic eventually resolves itself in the viewer's necessary dissociation from the verbal narration and his identification with a more effective, visual reading of meanings.

We are brought initially to assume a number of realistic positions in our viewing. These are obviously the text's manipulation of our prior conditioning to the patterns of realistic film viewings. Eventually we must "unlearn" these patterns of perception, recognize that the text's center of coherence is moving us progressively further away from our original sense of a realistic point of view in our perception of action. The opening and closing images of the film demonstrate the broad terms of the repositioning project invested in the film's narrational scheme. Visually, these two images are identical. In each we see a car moving along a Castilian country road, slowly approaching the camera. In the opening scene this image is accompanied by a voice-over, Luis, later identified as Luis,, reading lines which seem to be from a letter or a personal diary: "It had been years since I last saw my father . . . His illness coincided with the crisis of my marriage, I mean with one of the crises of my marriage."

Conditioned by the practices of realistic narrative rhetoric in film, the spectator likely presumes this verbal prologue to be a man's framing perspective as flashback on events which the film will detail visually. We come quickly to abandon this reading in the next sequence as we discover that it is Elisa who is visiting her father and it is her marital difficulties which coincide with his illness. Later we learn that Luis is composing a personal memoir in fragments from an eccentric point of view. Insistently, the text enforces upon us the sense that Luis is the principal if not exclusive agency of narration. A number of flashbacks, for instance, are clearly Luis's remembrances of his earlier abandonment of his family and his illness. These are juxtaposed with other flashbacks which, though they appear to be centered in Elisa's psyche, are somehow vaguely related to her memory of her father. Significantly, each of these scenes ends with an image of Luis standing at the window of his study, gazing pensively at the Castilian landscape. Yet, as much as Luis is marked as the narrational center of the film, Elisa is given a central if ambiguous place. The process of our reading becomes a search for an understanding of Elisa's place in the text.

By the film's end when, after Luis's death, the initial scene is repeated, we hear Elisa read the same lines which Luis spoke at the beginning. We come finally to identify in Elisa the spiritual regeneration of Luis, but only as we have made a profound revision in our own perceptual relation to the film

and its images.

As disconcerting as this revision may at first appear, it is nonetheless predicated on Luis's point of view, his "rhetoric of living" as it might be called. In an early scene when he is with his family at a birthday celebration, his son-in-law, Julian, chides Luis on his misanthropic attitudes. Julian speaks of "reality . . . of a society formed by individuals who accept social norms in order to survive." "And who dictates those norms?" Luis retorts. We are made to understand that this is a man who, in his actions and perceptions, embraces a concept of the individual who is liberated from the collective social patterns which deprive him of his individual creative spirit. Luis tells Elisa at another point that he would like to forget everything he has learned in the social world, and it is this notion of forgetting social norms which describes the process of his narration.

But Luis is not merely an aging romantic. Saura juxtaposes two specific notions of the individual which arise out of Hispanic cultural tradition and situates Luis's creative imagination as a resolution of the opposition inherent in these. The film's title, for instance, derives from a verse by the sixteenth century lyric poet, Garcilaso de la Vega. Luis even recites Garcilaso's poetry to his daughter and thereby identifies his own spirit within a recognizable Spanish poetic tradition which esteems the creative value of the autonomous individual. But that individualism Saura well knows, is denied by the conservative ideology of the Counter-Reformation, which sees the individual's actions as limited by the norms of a preordained divine order. It is no accident that the play which Luis rehearses with his students is Calderón de la Barca's seventeenth century allegory which eloquently states the conservative vision of the individual playing his predetermined role in the "great theater of life."[8]

In the scene where Luis brings Elisa to observe his class and to help him in rehearsing Calderón's *Gran teatro del mundo*, Saura illuminates what has been up to this point the cryptic nature of Luis's narration. The Calderonian allegory is centered in the presence of a character called "The Author," clearly intended to represent God. In turn, a number of other characters who are the Author's creations—World, Beauty, King—appear before him and are judged to be either sufficient or lacking in their performance. When one character rejects the role assigned to him, the author makes clear that there is no place for free choice in the theater of life; roles are fixed and one either performs well or else does not.

The function of Calderón's allegory is to teach its audience to submit to the positions it has been given in the world. But as Luis teaches the play to his class, and indirectly to Elisa, Saura subverts that lesson. Luis asks Elisa to read the lines indicated for the character called World, as he reads the lines for the Author. The class becomes on-screen spectators of this ironic rehearsal of the larger rehearsal of life. In luring Elisa into the play, which seems clearly to be Luis's intention, he brings her to understand, for an instant, the ways in which her own social identity, her role in family and marriage, have been constructed within a larger picture. These two roles, those of Author and World, mirror the functions which Luis and Elisa play in the narration of Luis's memoir. In an essential way, the classroom scene illuminates the spirit of demystification which is basic to the idea of Luis's narrational strategy.

His classroom lesson is directed as much to his students as to his daughter. He aims to liberate them, and the spectator as well, from the perspectival order which has entrapped each within a normative social identity. Just as the class is able to stand back and observe, and presumably grow beyond the closed world Calderón proposes, so Elisa will shortly assume an imaginative position which will enable her to create her own identity beyond these norms.

When at last she assumes the role of director of the play during Luis' illness, she appears to have completely absorbed her father's creative posture. We see her as director of the performance, but also

as its spectator, exactly the dual role which her father held in his own narration. Ironically, this is also the role occupied by Calderón's Author, who was also both character and observer of the play of life. Elisa is now teacher, author of a constructive perspective for others, and finally, audience to her own work. When Elisa takes up Luis's memoir at the film's end, the spectator finds himself replicating these very same multiple roles. The final image of the film brings with it the spectator's recognition of his own revision of perspective, just as Luis's instruction had worked to reposition his daughter.

In its ultimate sense, *Elisa, My Love* leads the spectator to recognize the culturally defined position which he has been conditioned to accept by his own repressive education in society. As the film insists, the individual's authentic sense of his own identity can only be achieved through a personal subversion of the collective norms which have shaped his social consciousness. The film points to the possibility of such a subversion through a constructive imagination, a displacement of self from the locus of representations which have shaped the perceptual habits of each individual.

Blindfolded Eyes (Los Ojos Vendados)

As Saura views the resurgence of ultraconservatism in Spain, the rise of terrorist groups of both the right and left, and the concerted resistance to the liberalization of social institutions, he is led to frame the theme of a constructive imagination in new, more explicit terms. *Blindfolded Eyes* (1978) and *Mama Turns 100* (1979) inscribe the conservative features of his spectator within the structures of narration in ways that suggest that Saura's experimental urges are always grounded in his awareness of the cultural formation of his immediate Spanish audience.

In *Blindfolded Eyes* we see a literalized spectator-in-the-text who is defined precisely in terms of the intertext of Spain's repressive education. The film begins and ends in a theater and the first and last images are shot from the vantage of a seat both literally and figuratively occupied by the spectator of a performance. This is the story of characters who are made the spectators of performances which mirror the repressive structures of their own personal predicaments. Performance becomes the catalyst through which each is brought to adopt a liberating perspective on their own actions and identity.

By making the question of the spectator so central an element of the film's plot, Saura appeared to some critics to be falling prey to his own weakness of schematizing his film.[9] In fact, this literalization of the spectator within the film is only evidence of his profound grasp of the evasionist, conservative urge of his audience to stabilize its own perception within the convenient structures of false consciousness. The psychic features of this conservatism are formulated within the very fabric of the film's plot and become the source of a remarkable act of cinematic aggression which aims to shatter the viewer's false consciousness.

Luis, the director of a drama school, becomes obsessed with the memory of the testimony given by Ines, an Argentine woman, at a public forum on political torture in South America. Dressed in a raincoat, kerchief, and reflecting sunglasses to protect her identity, she narrates the story of her abduction and torture by political terrorists in subdued, dispassionate tones. Luis, as a member of the official tribunal convoked to hear the evidence of political torture, finds Ines's story disturbingly like a theatrical performance rendered by a actress who seems to know her part too well.[10] He forms the idea of producing a staged version of this tribunal and of Ines's story, in a sense to attack the problem of the ways in which human experience is betrayed by the social artifices within which those experiences are presented. But Luis also identifies intimately with the deeper spirit of Ines's tale, her sense of defenselessness at the hands of anonymous aggressors.

Emilia, the wife of Luis' dentist and friend, Manuel, asks Luis if she can join his acting classes.

Geraldine Chaplin, who plays the role of Ines in the early scenes of the film, also portrays Emilia. As the dentist's wife, she leads a thoroughly confining existence and intuitively senses that Luis's acting school may afford her some outlet for her problems. The friendship between Emilia and Luis quickly turns to love. When Manuel threatens to kill Emilia, she leaves him and moves in with Luis. The director begins to see Emilia as the ideal actress to play the role of Ines in his play. Saura's continuing theme of marriage and family as the sources of regressive individual education now takes a more strident direction as he exposes the family as the source of the violence which eventually erupts as political terrorism.

As the rehearsals for the play progress, Luis begins to receive anonymous letters threatening him with reprisals if he does not abandon his project. Even after his studio is vandalized and he is beaten by thugs, he holds steadfastly to his idea of producing the play. He sees in the play a creative as well as an ethical act, one which affirms his own identity as both a creative individual and a member of a social community. In a curious way this attitude echoes the position by Luis in *Elisa, My Love*, who saw the reaffirmation of his own creativity in the dramatic project of staging the Calderonian allegory.

During the performance of Luis's play at the end of *Blindfolded Eyes*, a group of masked commandos armed with machine guns enters the theater and massacres the actors and audience just as Emilia is speaking the lines with which the film began. The final image on the screen is a shot of the empty stage as seen from one of the seats in the back of the theater.

Within the narrative and visual structures of the dialectic of art and life, Saura explores the forms of intimidation and implied aggression through which the passivity of the individual is maintained. The use of blindfolded eyes as the film's title suggests that the real spectator has been manipulated by an invisible, repressive structure to accept the illusion of his own freedom and autonomy as an individual. The reflecting sunglasses worn by Ines and later Emilia show the filmed audience and the real spectator the persistent image of their own entrapment as they look at the character on stage. What we are seeing here is not so much the character as victim, Ines or Emilia, but a deconstruction of the codes of social sight which are the true source of each viewer's victimization. The sunglasses worn by the two women in the theater are paired with the bandages which Ines's abductors put over her eyes in the scene in which her kidnapping is reenacted. The insistent motif of bandaged and covered eyes and eyes that reflect the image of those who are looking at them concretizes the underlying project of the film: to transform the spectator's scopic act—his looking at the other—into a specular act—looking at his own perceptual habits as they confine him within the traps of visual and social illusion.

To be able to understand one's confinement in the sentimental traps authenticated by society, the individual needs to achieve perceptual self-distanciation. This is precisely what Luis calls constructive imagination during one of his acting classes. In reflecting on his own past, he recalls the way he first met Manuel and Emilia. Driving on a lonely country road, he suddenly felt chest pains. Stopping his car at the roadside, he got out and lay down in a field as if about to die. Manuel's car stopped, and the dentist and Emilia offered him help. Later in the film, Luis will remember how he brought Emilia to this same deserted place and made love with her where he had once imagined he was about to die.

The scene of their love-making is recalled as Luis is helping Emilia rehearse her lines. He tells her to read the lines as if she were repeating some distant memory. His mind then flashes on the scene of sexual union, only to cut again to a visual enactment of the attack which Emilia is describing in her own narration of Ines's story. This sequence echoes the pattern of narrational distanciation with which Luis

has narrated other scenes from his life; it clearly grows out of his inspiration from Ines. Significantly, this enigmatic space of the field as the site of both love and death is the place where Luis recreated in his own mind the assault on Ines. This same setting becomes the space of creative distanciation, of constructive imagination offered to the spectator for reflection. Separated from any of the other spaces of action, it stands as the emblem of the distance which one must establish in order to achieve the creative, liberated position to which the film continually guides us.

Mama Turns 100

In the final violent image of the massacre in *Blindfolded Eyes*, Saura as much as acknowledges that the real obstacle to constructive imagination is the deeply ingrained tradition of conservatism which immobilizes the spectator and makes him victim of his repressive personal history. He addresses that same problem in *Mama Turns 100* (1979), a film which, in a self-conscious flourish, concludes Saura's quartet. Describing what led him to make what many consider a major deviation from his earlier style, he says: "After *Cría!*, *Elisa*, and *Blindfolded Eyes*, I found myself exhausted, as if I were dried up. I saw the need to make a different kind of film, a film in a different tone . . . The state of mind that seems to be at the root of *Mama* is that of a convulsion, almost a fury, a kind of catharsis."[11]

Thematically, *Mama Turns 100* has close affinities to the previous works in this cycle. Saura calls the film a "family album,"[12] and, like the earlier works, it draws our attention to the theme of the family as a form of psychic bondage. After the morose and sombre tone of *Cría!*, *Elisa*, and the violence of *Blindfolded Eyes*, Saura's dedicated audiences in Spain and abroad were not prepared for a comedy, which is exactly what *Mama* is. Yet the film needs to be considered seriously, if for no other reason than that it raises the question of the spectator again in new and revealing ways.

Mama is a relatively free continuation of Saura's earlier *Ana and the Wolves* (1972). The plot examines how the various characters have changed over fifteen years since the end of *Ana*. The matriarch is now approaching her one hundredth birthday and a gala birthday party is planned. Mama's children are vexed by her longevity and would prefer to see her expire quickly so that they can get on with the business of the future, which for them means selling her huge estate to land developers. They plan to precipitate her death by provoking one of her frequent epileptic seizures at her birthday party. Ana, former governess to Mama's three granddaughters, is enlisted to protect the old lady by keeping Mama's medicine on hand at all times. In the twenty-four hours leading up to the gala festivities, we are shown just how much or how little everyone in the family has changed since audiences last viewed them.

As in the three earlier films, the contemplation of the idea of death becomes the stimulus for personal reflection by characters and spectator alike. Saura sees the "contemplation of the fact of 'death' linked to a process of comprehension, of maturity," as he says. "Death gives meaning to life, that is to say, that life would be without meaning without the idea of death."[13]

The project of the narrative is to promote in the spectator a distanced contemplation of the habits of his own past cultural perception as a preamble to a contemplation of his future. Mama's impending death, loosely analogous to Franco's death, becomes the occasion for a contemplative pause. Even though the themes of death and contemplation of an uncertain future figure prominently here, *Mama Turns 100* is really a festive film, a parodic remembrance of things past. Saura even makes his own past in film the brunt of nostalgic jokes. Not only is *Ana and the Wolves* the source of a self-reflexive satire, but a number of characters are now developed as obvious parodies of characters from his other works.[14] The centerpiece of that comic retrospection is, of course, Mama herself, as she clings to the traditional beliefs of family values. She

makes us question the inviolability of the clan and the other themes which have immobilized the Spanish character in the face of a rapidly changing world. The past and the future of Spain hang in the balance as the film exploits the question of whether or not Mama will survive her centenary.

The contemplation of death is immediately linked to these broader questions in the opening scenes of the film as we are introduced to Saura's visual and narrative strategy. The pre-credit shots show Mama, flanked by her family and servants, contemplating the grave of José, one of her sons who had recently died. Though the film gives the appearance of "classical" film editing, Mama's "look," her reflection on events, is made the narrational source of the opening and closing shots of the film. Only retrospectively will the spectator realize that this is both her story and her narration.

After we situate the initial view of narrative space within Mama's nostalgic perspective, the camera pans away from the grave site in the film credits to a view of a car approaching the front entrance of the huge and decaying country house where all of the action of the film will take place. When the car reaches the front entrance, Ana and her husband, Antonio, get out and view the decrepit facade of the building. Ana, armed with a Polaroid camera, begins to take a series of shots of the building and surrounding grounds. Antonio casts a furtive glance at the Madrid skyline, barely visible through the morning smog. With precise visual economy Saura has established the thematic core of the whole film: the confrontation with the fact of death framed by the two opposing perspectives of ingenuous retrospection and a cynical view of the monstrous future which awaits the Spaniard.

What needs to be recognized as central to Saura's conception of *Mama Turns 100*, and what foreign audiences have been particularly obtuse about, is that the hoary plotting and the strikingly unproblematic texture of visual composition work as part of a strategy to engage a deeply conservative audience to confront the film's conceptual project. The patterns of narration both center and reflect the consciousness of a tradition-bound Spanish audience not easily moved to recognize the dilemma of its own illusionist sight and beliefs.

After the credit sequence, the rest of the film works as a prismatic structuring of events as perceived by a half dozen characters who, as they eavesdrop, witness other family members still refusing to confront their own absurd state. The viewer is brought to occupy each of these perspectives, to evaluate them, and then is dislocated by the conflicting point of view of another character. Initially, we are made to sympathize with Ana's nostalgic point of view as she leads us to appreciate the old ways of life embodied in Mama, whom she loves dearly. But this judgment and perspective are shortly subverted as we pass to the point of view of Natalia, Mama's voluptuous granddaughter, who proceeds to seduce Antonio, Ana's husband.

The spectator is progressively involved in a narrative inquiry, not only concerning the point of view of each character, but also the social values which, from his own perspective, seem either meaningless or merely anachronistic. Each character's point of view is eventually shown to be insufficient, incapable of resolving the narrative intrigue. Only Mama appears to have a grasp of the whole, for after all, Saura's jesting question is: What has a hundred years of experience taught the Spaniard about himself?

He makes her appear as a doting fool for much of the film, but that is because we are made to see her through the eyes of others. She is secretly endowed with magical powers of clairvoyance. Thus she knows that her sons are planning to let her die and takes appropriate measures to protect herself. Because she possesses this magical power to hear the thoughts of others, clearly at odds with the otherwise realistic patterns of representation in the rest of the film, the spectator finds himself in a curious relation to the old lady. He is at first centered by the plot to follow the intrigues brewing around Mama.

Yet at the same time, her magical status makes him stand back and ponder the meaning of this strange figure, in a sense repeating a form of reflection on Mama in which the fictional characters are all so actively engaged.

We should recognize that there is a highly controlled process of identification-distanciation within the construction of the film which guides our viewing of Mama, and it is most apparent at the two key moments when we witness her epileptic seizures. In each scene, at the exact moment of Mama's apparent death, all the characters freeze into a tableau; a mysterious helicopter is heard hovering over the house and then suddenly the action resumes. In both scenes Mama recovers, having had a momentary experience of her own death. The point of this illusion-breaking device is precisely to disengage the real spectator from the narrative intrigue, to make him stand back and contemplate the meaning of death at the exact moment that the characters do. Ironically, Saura makes both of these scenes moments of recovery, regeneration, as Mama is given a new perception of her life in perspective.

In the second seizure, at the birthday party, we have the film's conceptual and narrative climax. Just as it appears that Mama has finally died, she miraculously revives and tells the assembled family members that in one flashing instant she has seen her whole life rush by and she now knows it was all futility. As she speaks, the camera breaks away from her in close-up and recedes down the corridor of the house, out into open air, providing us with a final dwarfed view of the setting and characters. This image lingers on the screen as a freeze-frame. It situates the world of the characters in recognizable relation to the audience, inviting us to ponder now the questions of past and future.

Saura doesn't give a facile closure to the film. Rather he moves his viewer to assume all the specular positions which we now recognize to be the patterns of constructive imagination: distanciation and disengagement from illusion; reflection on the past; finally, recognition of the perceptual snares which have situated the viewer within the confines of illusory representation. The final moments of *Mama Turns 100* are really not unlike the structures which inform Saura's earlier work. They bring the spectator to a state of pensiveness and, with the perceptual knowledge he now has of his position in culture, invite him to reflect upon the possibilities of a future distinct from the illusions of his past.

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NOTES

[1]This essay is based on research conducted in Spain in 1979-80 through a grant from the U.S.-Spanish Joint Committee on Educational and Cultural Exchange.

[2]Nick Browne, "The Spectator-in-the-text: The Rhetoric of *Stagecoach*," *Film Quarterly*, XXIX, 2 (Winter 1975-76), p. 35.

[3]Interview with Carlos Saura, March, 1980. Translations here and elsewhere from Spanish and French are my own.

[4]"Entrevista con Angel Harguindey," *Cría cuervos* (Madrid: Elías Querejeta Ediciones, 1976), pp. 119-120.

[5]Ironically, *Cría!* was scripted and shot before Franco's death.

[6]Enrique Brasó, "Entretien avec Carlos Saura," *Positif*, 194 (June 1977), p. 5. Hereafter cited as Brasó.

[7]Brasó, p. 4.

[8]Saura tells Brasó: "In the Spanish cinema there has always been a strange fear of showing our sensibilities. One of the causes of that is that a false image has been given to us. Outside of Spain one supposes that being Spanish means being brutal, elemental, violent, when it would be just as easy to show the sensibility of our writers and of our painters." Brasó, p. 5.

[9]See particularly Norberto Alcover, "*Los ojos vendados*," *Cine para leer* (Bilbao: Editorial Mensajero, 1978), pp. 273-78.

[10]Saura was actually a participant in the Russell Tribunal held in Madrid and got the idea for *Blindfolded Eyes* after hearing the testimony of a woman who was the victim of an Argentine terrorist group. See "Carlos Saura escribe sobre

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Los ojos vendados," *Nuevos fotogramas*, 1542 (12 May 1978), p. 20.

[11]Manuel Hidalgo, "Saura cumple veinte años," *Nuevos fotogramas*, 1610 (7 September 1979), p. 2.

[12]Diego Galán, "La libertad de Carlos Saura," *Triunfo*, 872 (13 October 1979), p. 48.

[13]Brasó, p. 4.

[14]José Luis Guerín, "El cumpleaños de Saura," *Cinema 2002*, 59 (January 1980), p. 59.

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Geraldine Chaplin and Ana Torrent in *Cría Cuervos* (1975)

"Soñar con tus ojos"* Carlos Saura's Melodic Cinema

Annette Insdorf

Carlos Saura has emerged as the most prolific, compelling and internationally renowned among young Spanish filmmakers. His haunting visual style is clearly influenced by foreign directors like Ingmar Bergman and Alain Resnais[1]; however, the thematic and tonal quality of his films is profoundly Spanish in its yoking of love and death, its constant invocation of the past, and its fluid oscillation between realism and fantasy. Saura's rich oeuvre exhibits at least two notable concerns: the centrality of the child, including the loss of innocence; and the use of music as an increasingly more central narrative device. This essay will explore three of his later films — *Cría Cuervos* (1975), *De Prisa, De Prisa* (1981), and *Bodas de Sangre* (1981) — which, together, trace a movement in Saura's career from complex narrative structure to simplicity, from subjective meditation to distanced chronicle, and from an obsession with the past to a denial of delineated time. In each case, the music plays a primordial role, as the soundtrack engenders the camera track.

Cría begins with a family album and a delicate melody on the piano: both the image and sound create gentle nostalgia — a play of time which the rest of the film will develop. Like the photographs (*Elisa, Vida Mia, Spirit of the Beehive, My Darling Señorita*, Furtivos, Los Ojos Vendados), those in *Cría's* opening album suggest a deep concern with continuity; moreover, they attest to how Spanish films are haunted by the past — a past of repression, loss, and the need for circumvention. At subsequent points in *Cría*, we will see the grandmother's aging photographs as well as the album being put together by young Irene. The backward glance that these assembled images afford literalizes *Cría's* narrative structure: the story is told through flashback, calling attention to the shaping power of memory and imagination.

*"Soñar con tus ojos" (to dream with your eyes) is a line from "Me Quedo Contigo," a song in *De Prisa, De Prisa*.

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*"Soñar con tus ojos" (to dream with your eyes) is a line from "Me Quedo Contigo," a song in *De Prisa, De Prisa.*

Young Ana (Ana Torrent) awakens in the night and finds that her father has died while in bed with a friend's wife. She calmly washes a glass, talks to her mother (Geraldine Chaplin) when she enters the kitchen, and returns to bed. It is only in the next sequence, when Ana and her sisters are prepared for the father's funeral by the maid Rose, that we realize the complexity of the preceding scene. Rosa combs Ana's hair; suddenly her mother is combing it; in the next shot, it is once again Rose. We learn that Ana's mother Maria is dead, and that her appearances throughout the film exist via Ana's imagination; the strength of the child's need for her supersedes actuality and enriches the film with emotional truth. The intense subjectivity of the film, locating us within Ana's mind, can be seen when the child is pushing her grandmother's wheelchair (Spain's paralyzed past?) in the garden: she looks up to see flashing lights, and a subjective camera zooms into a figure on the roof. The figure is Ana. Ana's double jumps and the camera floats with her in gentle flight.

The "doubleness" of Ana's existence — the quotidian and the vividly imagined — is further conveyed in the next sequence: a woman's voice-over enters when Ana plays with a box of poison. The camera pans to the face we identify as Ana's mother (Geraldine Chaplin), but it is now a grown-up Ana, recounting the events twenty years after her father's death! The coexistence of these two women in space (without a cut) implies their coexistence in time; the grown Ana's voice engenders images of the past, just as a song in the next scene leads a memory from further back in time to surface.

Rosa tells little Ana how her father was a ladies' man, and the lusty maid sings an old melody, "Mari Cruz." The camera moves into a close-up of Ana's face, tilts up, and finds her father — as if alive —looking lustfully at Rosa through the glass door. The same song returns a few scenes later when Ana puts on the record her grandmother wants to hear. An old rendition of this tune is accompanied by a pan of the woman's photographs; "Mari Cruz" is thus a Proustian device, a verbal madeleine that conjures up a visible past. Saura's camera takes its signal from these still photographs, as it pans again from the grown Ana addressing the camera, to the death of her mother twenty years before. And in the next scene, music once again comforts the listener, dissolves time, and allows the dead to return : the gentle piano melody heard at the beginning comes back when little Ana misses her mother in the night and goes downstairs. There, she finds the smiling Maria and asks her to play the song she loves so much. Maria obliges, and Ana rests her head on her momentarily-breathing mother as the melody continues.

If the grandmother's piece of music is "Mari Cruz" and the mother's is the melody on piano (composed by Fernand Mompon), Ana has hers too : she plays a record of "Porque te vas?", a contemporary tune whose lyrics are appropriate to the child's situation — "Why are you leaving me?" (This song became a big hit in Paris when *Cria* opened there in 1976.) As the record plays, Ana dances with her sisters, and the music stimulates a flow of affection among the three little girls. But as is true of their mother and grandmother, death — or a longing for death — is built into the texture of their lives. After Maria screams, "I want to die," Ana repeats her cry; when she asks her grandmother if she wants to die, the paralyzed woman nods yes; and the game that the girls play consists of one "dying" and the other praying to the Guardian Angel to revive her.

A more serious "game" that Ana plays is with the box of poison : after her aunt (who is acting as their guardian) slaps her, Ana gives her a glass of milk into which she has put some of the alleged poison. After her aunt drinks the milk, Ana washes the glass in the same manner as after her father's death; however, when the aunt walks in the next morning, we realize the box does not contain poison after all. And, we presume, Ana knows she has not murdered her father.

The root of this yearning for death is suggested

by the funeral that Ana makes when her pet Roni dies. She buries the hamster in a shoebox that has a cross drawn on it, along with a religious postcard. The Christian iconography — along with her mother's name Maria — implies a connective tissue which is developed in Saura's *Mama Turns 100* (1979). The spunky centenarian manifests her presence as a divine light (plus voice) entering a cave to comfort her daughter Ana (Geraldine Chaplin); she is lowered in a chair from the roof for her birthday party; and she has epileptic fits, as if seized by supernatural forces. The very style of these films depends upon the supernatural — activated mainly through female characters — and these mothers suggest that the authority of religion in Spain is ultimately stronger than that of politics, for it incorporates transcendence.

That Ana wishes to kill her father and remain with her mother invites a political perspective. We first glimpse the father in the opening photo album: he is in a military uniform, astride a horse. When the girls ask Rosa what their father did in the war, she says he fought beside the Nazis in Russia. To kill the father is therefore symbolic of destroying fascism or the political father — Franco. To stay with mother is to embrace religion, continuity, and an innocent and harmonious female universe. (It seems noteworthy that Ana was a forceps baby — that she did not want to leave the womb. Or that Maria did not want to let go of her?) Ana sees her father brutalizing her mother, and when the girls dress up in their parents' clothes, they repeat the fights of the demanding husband and victimized wife.

In this regard, both *Cria* and *De Prisa, De Prisa* (Quickly, Quickly) can be seen as films on the loss of innocence, where children mimic — and are corrupted by — adult behavior and values. This neorealist study of juvenile delinquents in contemporary Madrid was unfortunately not released in the U.S., even after it won the Grand Prize at the Berlin Film Festival. (In France, it enjoyed a moderate success under the title *Vivre Vite.*) Like Saura's first feature, *Los Golfos* (1959), this drama focuses on a gang of young kids who do hold-ups. But by his 14th feature, Saura resisted the poetic construction and casting that characterized his previous films and opted for a harsh portrait with nonprofessional actors. Curiously enough (and as Hector Babenco would later demonstrate with *Pixote*), *De Prisa, De Prisa* succeeds in creating sympathy for unknown, unattractive, pimply-faced adolescents whom we meet ripping off a car. Although Saura hardly endears them to us, these kids are touching because of what they steal for: the consumer dream. They want to buy an apartment, a car, a television set for grandma, and so on, as good bourgeois should.

In the French press-book, Saura explained that his first screenplay for *De Prisa, De Prisa* didn't work because the characters were merely "the fruit of my imagination." Consequently, he spent months traveling through Madrid to meet the kind of young losers that his film was to explore. *De Prisa, De Prisa* thus became a collective project into which bits of real events — and incidents that were to happen *after* the production — were incorporated: the actors played variations on their own experience, and only months after the film's release, two were arrested for hold-ups.

Rather than merely tracing the daily routine of juvenile delinquents, *De Prisa, De Prisa* heightens the material through some dramatic shaping — the main protagonist Pablo is shot and his girlfriend Angela watches him die after a doctor double-crosses them — and through expressive music. Like the title, the songs of *De Prisa, De Prisa* convey urgency: the pulsating rhythms and regional melodies carry the film forward at a pace that communicates the gang's needs.[2] Although Saura eschews extreme close-ups or subjective camera, which would force identification with a character, he juxtaposes buoyant music with their anti-social acts —thereby mitigating condemnation. In particular, the songs of Los Chunguitos — "Me Quedo Contigo" (I'm Staying With You) and "Ay! Qué Dolor" (Oh, What Pain) — have a driving energy which is

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Mama Turns 100 (1979)

irresistible alongside their car speeding to and from crimes.

The soundtrack is a dynamic combination of ten songs, written at different times by a variety of musicians. In his study of Saura's films, the French critic Marcel Oms arranged the titles in their order of appearance in the film, resulting in a compressed chronicle of these kids' lives: "Story for a child, alas! What pain. I'm staying with you; I know only pleasure, I ask it of God in heaven, but hell dances with me: what gorgeous things!"[3] He concluded,

> Beyond the terminus of this frantic race, it is only death that might reveal gorgeous things

> to these lost kids, these angels with dirty faces, whose only sin will have been being born into a world that dispossesses childhood and its possibility for dreams, that substitutes for imagination the illusion of life in artificial hells of violence and drugs.[4]

Moreover, the two songs by "La Marelu" are apt because her raspy voice and flamenco arrangements yoke a contemporary sound with timeless rhythms. For the first time in a Carlos Saura film, there is no past invoked by the narrative — and no future. Whereas the Spanish Civil War always hovered in the background of his films, in *De Prisa, De Prisa*, one of the boys asks, "What war?"

Bodas de Sangre (Blood Wedding), Saura's subsequent film, contains neither a past nor a future tense, but because of style rather than situation. This dance film constitutes a radical departure and a return to the beginning of Saura's career as a photographer of dancers. Unlike his vigorous but delicate narratives such as *Cría, Elisa, Mia Vida*, and *Mama Turns 100*, this 71-minute film is a record of a stirring ballet. It presents Federico García Lorca's famous play, translated into dance by Spanish choreographer Antonio Gades. Like *De Prisa, De Prisa*, it can be seen as a staged documentary: just as juvenile delinquents played juvenile delinquents, here dancers play dancers. And, like the previous film, *Blood Wedding* is enclosed by death and a sense of implacable destiny.

The film begins backstage, as the dancers arrive to prepare their makeup and costumes. Then Gades himself leads the rehearsal, as the approximately 25 dancers perform Lorca's primal story of love and murder. In the first part of the film, the camera is identified with a mirror, objectively recording the preparations for the dance. By the time the dancers perform, however, it finds its own creative angles and rhythms, virtually participating in the ballet. Whether it presents the dancers from high-angle or tracks at ground level alongside their eloquent feet, it adds a cinematic choreography to that of the dancers.

With the stirring melodies of Emilio de Diego (who also composed two of the numbers in *De Prisa, De Prisa*), *Blood Wedding* is a new kind of film musical. Like Saura's earlier exploration of theater, *Los Ojos Vendados* (Blindfolded, 1978), it focuses on rehearsal rather than finished performance. In this manner, it captures the raw physical effort and the spontaneous vitality of art in process. From the poetic narration of *Cría* to the neorealism of *De Prisa, De Prisa* and finally the stylization of *Blood Wedding*, Saura seems to be moving further from characters (and the past) to a formal distanciation that reveals his basic concerns : passion, art, and the space they share. There are no more children in *Blood Wedding*, but there is the fascination with the growth of a living entity — a ballet rather than a person. Once again, music is a pretext for the image, as a haunting melody invites the camera to dance.

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NOTES

[1]See my article, "Spain Also Rises," *Film Comment* 16,4 (July-August 1980, pp. 13-17), for Saura's comments on influences and native traditions.

[2]The soundtrack of *De Prisa, De Prisa* was released in France by Pathé Marconi-EMI as *Vivre Vite*.

[3]Marcel Oms, *Carlos Saura* (Paris: Edilig/Cinégraphiques Collection, 1981), p. 88.

[4]Ibid.

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Blood Wedding (1981)

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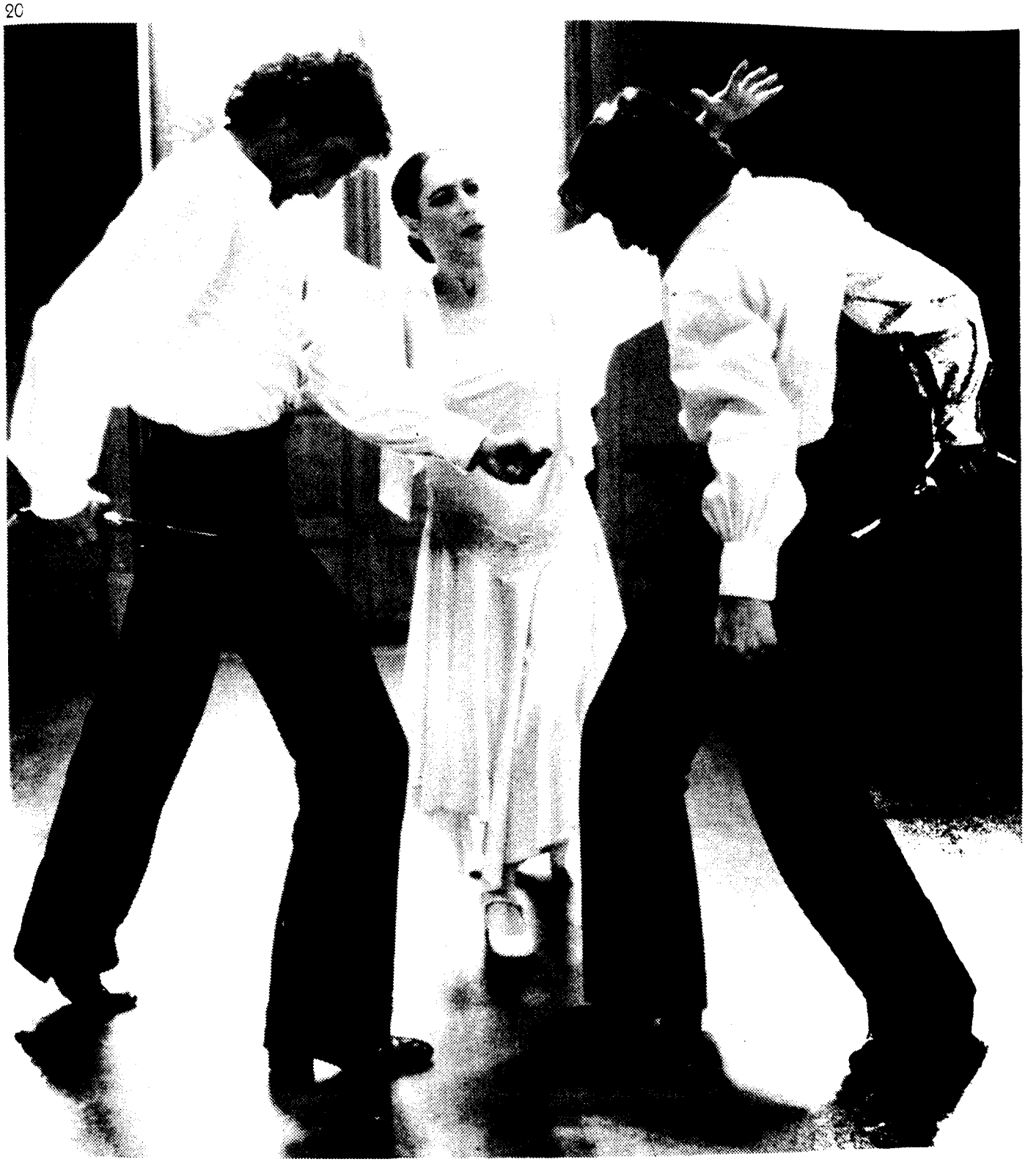

The Children of Franco in the New Spanish Cinema

Marsha Kinder

When José Luis Borau recently visited one of my cinema courses at USC, he spoke of his generation of filmmakers who had come from the School of Cinematography (Escuela Oficial de Cinematografía) from which he himself had graduated in 1961 and where he continued to teach until 1970 and where Carlos Saura had also been a professor for several years—and how they had been perceived by those in the film industry before they went on to create the New Spanish Cinema:

> It was a very good school or, at least, very useful—we learned almost everything about filmmaking there. What is sad is that it doesn't exist anymore. Now the school is for all the arts; it's become too official and too weak. It's very curious because in fact the school died with Franco. Yet the school was very anti-Franco. We had lots of fights during the Franco years and lots of strikes. We saw films from all over the world—even from Russia, even leftist films. They would come to Spain only for the school because at that time it was not easy to see foreign films in our country.... The older generations that were already in the film industry hated us. They said we were reds, hippies or existentialists, that we were crazy or stupid.... Although some of us were then 38, 40 and 42, they called us "young directors," and almost nobody would trust us or give us an opportunity to direct. Now in Spain our really young directors are between 20 and 30, and our generation is not young anymore. Our time was very short because we were the children of Franco.[1]

Because of their position in the repressive patriarchal Franquist society and in the state-supported, paternalistic film industry molded by Franco (who had followed the example of Hitler and Mussolini[2]), this generation of filmmakers was forced always to define themselves and their films in opposition to Franco, both before and after his

death in 1975. They were led to see themselves as emotionally and politically stunted children who were no longer young; who, because of the imposed role as "silent witness" to a tragic war that had divided country, family and self, had never been innocent; and who, because of the oppressive domination of the previous generation, were obsessed with the past and might never be ready to take responsibiity for changing the future.

José Luis Borau and Carlos Saura, the leading filmmakers of this generation and the two major forces behind the New Spanish Cinema, both struggled against this process of infantilization by asserting their individuality and adopting (in Saura's words) "an active stance" that shaped their approach to filmmaking thematically, stylistically, and economically. This action was directed almost entirely against Franco, which again cast the artists in the role of rebellious sons opposing the father. Saura claims:

> I believe that when Franco was still alive, I had a moral obligation—maybe more for myself than for society—to do everything that was possible within my form of work to help change the political system as quickly as possible.[3]

Saura sees his position historically, identifying himself as a member of the younger generation whose experiments with modernist narrative are shaped not only by the repressive patriarch they try to subvert, but also by his heroic ancestors he tries to emulate.

> For me and my compatriots, to make the stories we wanted to do, we had to use indirect methods. For example, we couldn't use a linear structure or the ideas would be too clear. It often forced me to exercise my imagination. The same was true in the Golden Age of Spain when artists like Cervantes, Calderón de la Barca, and Lope de Vega had to avoid the repression of the Inquisition.[4]

To avoid being restricted by the paternalistic film industry, since 1965 Saura has collaborated with independent producer Elías Querejeta, who, like a supportive brother, grants him total artistic freedom in his struggle against the father.[5]

Borau has used a very different strategy to achieve a similar artistic independence. Like Saura, he develops a style that is subtle and indirect, frequently working through political allegory (as in *Furtivos* and *La Sabina*); but instead of turning to post-modernist experimentation with non-linear structure, multi-layered narration, and self-reflexive spectators-in-the-text, he looks back to Renoir and Rossellini for a humanistic realism that focuses on facts, action, and people. Borau is extremely wary of anything that detracts from these central concerns or that calls attention to the filmmaking process and its codes. Even more of a purist than his mentors, he avoids excessive camera movement, beautiful cinematography, nondiegetic music, clever dialogue and scenes designed to reveal character:

> I don't like my characters to do things that are unimportant. I like to begin with action and to end with action. The one thing is action.

Though his approach is based on a synthetic style of realistic representation, which Bazin, in discussing the works of Rossellini and Renoir, has described as "a form of self-effacement before reality,"[6] Borau transforms it into an "active stance," or another means of asserting his own artistic domination over the material and the medium.

> I think that when people go to see a movie, there's some kind of contract. You go to see the film and suppose the camera doesn't exist. As soon as you see the camera move, it begins to develop its own personality and becomes somebody else. And I don't need anybody else. In order to express myself, I need only the audience and me.... I don't need music to express feelings. I don't even

like pretty photography because sometimes it makes me jealous. If you say, 'how marvellous the landscape and the photography,' then you are not thinking about the story. I want the audience to be watching the human beings and the action, not the photography or the moving camera. The dialogue is the same. I don't use characters who speak too well. In my opinion, screenwriters are dangerous. If you are not careful, they begin to express themselves through their words, which is not good for me.... A director is not a writer, he is not merely somebody who directs actors, he is the one who finds the meaning of *everything* that he has in front of the camera.

Borau has also struggled to achieve autonomy in the economic realm. In 1967 he formed his own independent production company, El Imán, of which he remains the sole owner. This move guaranteed him total artistic control of the projects he writes, directs, and produces in collaboration with his old friends from the Madrid School of Cinematography. In a sense, Borau has created his own artistic family, with his close friend Luis Cuadrado[7] as cinematographer and former students like Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, Jaime Chávarri, Iván Zulueta, and Antonio Drove as co-writers and directors, casting himself in the role of benevolent patriarch.[8] He believes in investing his own money in his films, for it insures that he makes a total commitment to the project and assumes total responsibility for its success or failure. In dealing with government censorship both before and after the death of Franco, he realized that the issues were as much economic as political. When government authorities demanded forty cuts in *Furtivos* before its release, Borau refused to make the changes and then screened the film for critics, who published enthusiastic reviews, and at International Festivals, where it won prestigious prizes. This strategy proved successful, for it created an economic demand for its release in Spain; *Furtivos* turned out to be one of the biggest box office hits in the history of Spanish film. Borau believes the most dangerous kind of censorship is that exercised by the filmmaker himself, who, anticipating condemnation by the patriarchal authority, fails to take risks out of pessimism and fear. Such self-censorship is encouraged by a state that infantilizes individuals, trapping them forever in the confining persona of Franco's children.

In this essay, I intend to explore how this construct, "the children of Franco," is made manifest not only in the artistic praxis of the filmmakers as they struggled to assert their mature independence, but also in the representations on screen—of the precocious children who are both murderous monsters and poignant victims, and the stunted childlike adults who are obsessed with distorted visions of the past, both placed in the social context of a divided family that is fraught with sexual deviations and that functions as a microcosm for the corrupt state. I will examine this image in seven key works made between 1973 and 1980, the period surrounding the death of Franco: Victor Erice's *Spirit Of The Beehive (El Espiritu de la Colmena)*, 1973; Carlos Saura's *Cousin Angelica (La Prima Angélica)*, 1973, and *Cría (Cría Cuervos)*, 1975; Jaime de Armiñán's *The Nest (El Nido)*, 1980; Jaime Chávarri's *To An Unknown God (A Un Dios Desconocido)*, 1977; Manuel Gutiérrez Aragon's and José Luis Borau's *Black Brood (Camada Negra)*, 1977; and José Luis Borau's *Poachers (Furtivos)*, 1975.

The Children of Frankenstein in *The Spirit of the Beehive (1973)*

This film marks the screen debut of Ana Torrent, the child actress who most vividly represents the children of Franco. With a brooding sensitivity that captures every nuance of emotion and perception within their field of vision, her luminous dark eyes confront us with a bold knowing gaze, conveying a precocious intelligence, passion and intensity that

seem almost ominous in their power. Yet her pale oval face and slender birdlike frame create a fragility that also marks her as a victim—a delicate instrument for the registering of pain.

This duality embodied in Torrent is fully developed by the film's narrative, which connects it with the mythic resonance of *Frankenstein* while situating it specifically in the historic context of the Spanish Civil War. Ana is the younger sister in a family living in a small rural village in Castile shortly after the end of the war. The film shows how she absorbs the mysteries that surround her—the moral ambiguities generated by the war, the tensions in the family, the secrets of nature, the train that comes from the world outside, a fugitive from prison, the fearful darkness, macabre games, and movie images from the village cinema—all of which she weaves together into her own private vision that both reveals and shapes her consciousness.

In an extraordinary sequence that reverberates throughout the New Spanish cinema, the two sisters go to see James Whale's *Frankenstein.* Ana is imprinted with this cultural myth and its haunting images, which provide patterns for dealing with her own personal experience. Most disturbed by the monster's interaction with the little girl Maria, whom he seems to befriend but later kills (though the murder is not shown on screen), Ana persists in asking her sister why the monster killed the child. As if denying the power of movies and myth, Isabel explains that films aren't real. But this is little consolation to Ana, who has already absorbed the monster and victim as her doubles. Later, when she re-enacts in her imagination the romantic assignation with the monster, she casts herself in the role of the young girl and changes the setting from bright sunlight to her own brooding darkness. When she helps to hide a stranger, a Republican soldier who is fleeing from the Fascist authorities, she sees him as an incarnation of the monster. Unsure whether this act of friendship will result in her murder as in the movie, she is willing to take the risk, perhaps because the images that she saw on screen of the tender moments between man and child are far more powerful than the report of the killing, in which she can never quite believe. This romantic scene is so compelling partly because it functions as an idealized projection of the potential love between her and her father, whom she passionately loves and fears and who always remains emotionally distant. The secret relationship with the fugitive becomes another Oedipal substitute that she can act out and also embellish in her imagination. When her father learns about this relationship, he strongly disapproves, causing her to flee in passionate rebellion. When the fugitive soldier is killed, Ana reverses the myth and feels partly responsible for his death. In one scene, she looks deep into a well and sees her own reflection transformed into the face of Frankenstein's monster. Her guilt is related directly to her own fantasy life, which has made such a rich use of their encounter, fusing it with the myth of Frankenstein and her own Oedipal drama. She feels guilty for helping the stranger because it implies a romantic identification with the outlaw rebel and a betrayal of her father and other patriarchal authorities; yet she also feels guilty for not preventing his death, which in light of her fantasy projections is associated with the monstrous crime of patricide.

By making this stranger a Republican fleeing from the Fascist authorities in the period just after the Civil War, the narrative accentuates the political context. Under the pressures of a war that divided the nation, the family, and the individual, that generation of impressionable children would respond to repressive patriarchs with love and fear, entertaining distorted fantasies of heroic allegiance and rebellious patricide, dividing the self into victim and monster. The children of Franco would turn out to be the children of Frankenstein.

The James Whale *Frankenstein* is the perfect choice for adaptation to the Franquist context, not only because it's of the right vintage (1931), but also because, of all the versions, it places the greatest emphasis on the dramatic contrast between

the monster's infantile emotions and his adult, giantlike body, and also on the patriarchal nature of the powers that pervert and destroy him. Unlike the highly sophisticated creature in the novel[9] who speaks several languages, Boris Karloff's monster is a gigantic toddler, clumsily taking his first steps in a world that repeatedly brings disappointment rather than delight, poignantly expressing his needs through his inarticulate babble and moans, through his searching hands that are always seeking contact, and through the fluid range of emotions that play across his waxen face. This paradoxical contrast between the monster's grotesque form and his humanizing movements turns tragic, particularly in the encounter with Maria. Ignoring their physical differences, they share a pure delight in play. When we later learn of Maria's death, we think back to the joy expressed on the monster's face and to his huge hands, reaching out for loving contact with his playmate. Like Ana, we cannot believe that he has murdered her intentionally but surmise that his unawareness of his own physical nature has led him accidentally to kill the one he loves. The crime becomes more terrifying and moving precisely because it was unintended. Like Ana, it makes us fear own own fathomless infantile nature as well as the unknown powers in the hostile adult world that surrounds us.

The patriarchal emphasis is, of course, central to Mary Shelley's novel. Dr. Frankenstein is both an irresponsible, rejecting father to his brainchild and also a dangerous rebel against patriarchal authority. Through his scientific project, he challenges his professors and ultimately usurps the divine powers of creation. This duality is undoubtedly linked to the confusion that commonly occurs between Frankenstein and his monster, whose doubling for each other fosters a similar psychic process within Ana. Whale's movie intensifies this patriarchal conflict by adding several more fathers, all of whom are endorsed: an urbane, cynical baron who sees his son's scientific project as a foolish distraction from his serious class duty of marrying well and perpetuating the family name; a kindly professor who taught him everything he knows, but still wisely opposes his ambitious experiments; a burgomeister who officially leads both the hunt for the monster and the village celebration of Dr. Frankenstein's wedding; and the Divine father made manifest in the recurrent ringing of church bells, which are harmonious with Frankenstein's actions only when he marries his father's choice. All of these fathers stand in total opposition to the monster, whose destruction represents the final crushing of young Frankenstein's irresponsible rebellion and his rightful placement among the traditional patriarchs.[10]

The patriarchal emphasis also appears in the Maria episode, which is so crucial to Ana. Before meeting the monster, Maria urges her father to stay home and play with her, but her request is denied. This added detail suggests that the monster is not only a playmate, but also a father substitute in her own Oedipal fantasies. Her death is visualized in a very moving scene in which her grief-stricken father carries her lifeless body through streets where villagers are joyously celebrating Frankenstein's wedding. The incongruous setting not only heightens the intensity of his grief, which because of his earlier rejection must be tinged with guilt, but also suggests the romantic potential of their love. It is this subtle network of primal associations that Ana as a young spectator unconsciously absorbs as the deep structure for her own private fantasies about all the father figures in her life. *The Spirit of the Beehive* powerfully demonstrates how this story of Frankenstein, which centers on an obsessive love/hate relationship between an austere father and a stunted child, is the perfect myth for the children of Franco.

Two by Saura: The Childlike Man and the Patricidal Child

In his very first feature *Los Golfos* (The Urchins), 1959, Saura claims that he focused on young delinquents in order to get commentary past the

censors. Of all his films the image of childhood is most powerful and most political in *Cousin Angelica* (1973) and *Cría cuervos* (1975), the two works that were made and released closest to the death of Franco. These two films can be seen as companion pieces. According to Saura, "Every film is a consequence of the film before it. Only when a film is completed, do I feel the necessity of starting the next one."[11] In this case the films are linked by a common image with which *Cousin Angelica* ends and *Cría* begins—a mother combing her daughter's hair before a mirror which is the camera. The image was not in the script for *Cousin Angelica* but came to him during the shooting and subsequently gave birth to *Cría*. In a 1974 interview, he reveals:

> I have been obsessed with the image of a mother and her daughter for a long time. It is an idea that haunts me, and perhaps it will become a picture some day. That image fascinates me. I find very exciting to what extent a human being can split in two—because it is the images of Angélica's split, the mother and daughter of 1936, that, at the same time, stand for the present mother and daughter; usly the daughter in 1936 and the mother in 1973 are in fact the same person. It is the confluence but notice that, obvioof two images, separated all along the picture, that are united at the last moment.[12]

This is the territory that Saura explores in both films—the splitting of the self into the isolated, hyper-sensitive, indelibly imprinted child and the emotionally stunted adult, the two sides of the children of Franco. This psychological model of the divided self, a tense oscillation between two ego states, can be found in the films of many other directors, including Ingmar Bergman; yet in Saura's works the psychological construct is always politicized—the childhood traumas are always directly related to historical events such as the Spanish Civil War in *Cousin Angelica* or the death of Franco in Cría.

Cousin Angelica (1973): Devoured by Revisions of the Past

This film follows the outer and inner journey of Luis Cano (brilliantly played by José Luis López Vázquez, one of several fine Spanish actors who repeatedly portray the childlike adult), a quiet, lonely, middle-aged bachelor from Barcelona who comes home to a Castillian town to bury the bones of his mother, who has been dead for twenty years. Visiting his Aunt Pilar, with whom he lived thirty years ago during the Civil War, and his cousin Angélica, whom he loved as a child, he relives moments from his childhood, which was shaped by the war that bitterly split the family and separated him from his parents. The narrative dramatizes the temporal contrast between the past (1936) and the present (1973)—the same comparison that had been implicit in *Spirit of the Beehive* which was set in the late thirties and also made in 1973. In Saura's film, the Civil War is much more clearly identified as the primary force that molds the consciousness of the entire Spanish nation. Saura claims:

> The Spanish Civil War has been a decisive influence not only for those of us who lived through it, even if we were children at the time—I was four years old when the war began—, but also for later generations of Spaniards, for people born well afterwards but who, without experiencing the war directly, have lived under its consequences. A political system, awful personal conflicts, deaths in the family (every family has seen one of its members killed in action).[13]

As Saura's first autobiographical film, *Cousin Angelica* dramatizes the imprinting power of the war on the young Saura, whose mother's family was pro-Franco.

Instead of centering on events, Saura's conception of autobiography focuses on mental processes: "I don't like autobiographies that are like diaries. What interests me is the imagination working on one's own life—naturally, this offers a wide leeway for creations."[14] More specifically, the film reveals how the child's mind struggles with the fearful ambiguities of the war and how the adult consciousness reconstructs those vivid, yet distorted memories.

> I think I have shown the Civil War as I wanted to, because it agrees with my idea of what a child could feel the war meant. I recall I was at Barcelona at the war's ending; Barcelona was on the Republican side, and when the Franquist troops took the city, my bewilderment was terrible: because then the 'good ones' were already the 'bad ones,' and the 'bad ones' had become now the 'good ones.'[15]

These processes are introduced in the opening sequence, which immediately confronts us with powerful images that could be present experience, nightmare, or traumatic memory. As we hear choir boys singing, we see white mist drifting through a church schoolroom, which is illuminated by strange overexposed lighting; the camera slowly glides through wreckage, observing signs of violence from some unknown disaster. Later in the film, when we return to this image, we realize it was a childhood memory of a bombing of Luis's school, but one that has merged with other traumas—e.g., the death of an eleven-year-old boy, who was killed by a bomb while playing in a school courtyard, an incident Luis had never seen but had heard about from a priest who used it to instill the fear of sin and death in his students. In retrospect, the opening images seem less of an accurate representation of an historical event than a symbolic visualization of Luis's consciousness, which has been shaped by the War and the Church.

As in *Spirit of the Beehive*, movies also play a key role in imprinting the young mind, providing germinal images to be reworked in private fantasies and training the child to be a creative spectator to his own experience. One of Luis's most vivid memories is of a wartime documentary called "The Eyes of London," which showed "blue eyes everywhere." When we actually see the film played back in his mind, it is in black and white; the eyes are covered with dehumanized goggles and belong to uniformed men marching through wartime rubble. These images are rooted in Saura's own memories which, like Luis's, are drastically altered.

Cousin Angelica was based on a specific specular project—the adult Saura trying to visualize himself as a child.

> One day I looked in the mirror and said, 'My goodness, what did I look like as a child?' I can't remember myself as a child in the mirror. I have photographs, but when I look at them, I feel it's someone I don't know. When I've tried to reconstruct my past, I don't do so with the mentality of a child. Mostly I see myself as I am now, but going back 20 or 30 years. That was one of the fundamental ideas that made me make this film—that you cannot see yourself as a child.[16]

Saura assumes that distortion is inevitable; there will always be a gap between the Subject and the Imaginary Signifier—an idea that is visualized in the scene where Luis stares at his reflection in a mirror vainly searching for the child. In all of Luis's memories, we never see him as a boy. As in Karloff's portrayal of Frankenstein's monster, Vázquez must rely solely on his acting to transform his adult frame and features through childish postures, body movements, facial expressions, and voice inflections. After a while, we actually see the child in Luis and realize that it dominates as performer while the adult is restricted to the more passive role of spectator; even in the past, it had been the precocious

consciousness that had observed the actions of the child. Although Luis has come home to bury the past, it is more alive for him than the present. Increasingly, he becomes a spectator to his own reconstructed memories and less capable of taking any action whatsoever.

> As the picture proceeds, the past becomes more and more strong, unti it ends by overwhelming everything else. Really, I think that the development of the picture is clearly defined in the sense that, if the present has a greater influence during its first half, at the end Luis is devoured by his past.[17]

This process of being devoured by the past is most vividly demonstrated in Luis's reactions to Angélica. While rejecting the sexual advances of his adult cousin, he tries in vain to recapture their earlier eroticism with her nine-year-old daughter. At the end of his visit, he borrows the girl's bicycle and takes one last trip into the past. It is the traumatic incident that forever separates him from Angélica. The young lovers flee on a bicycle to Madrid, where they plan to be reunited with his parents. But they are stopped by Franquist soldiers, who return them to her angry father, who becomes the embodiment of Fascist tyranny. As he beats the cringing Luis with his leather belt, Angélica sits in the next room in front of a mirror, tearfully listening to his sobs as her mother soothes her by brushing her hair. This moment imprints them forever, splitting them not only from each other, but also from their own passionate feelings, transforming them into detached spectators of both the present and the past.

Cría Cuervos (1975): An Imaginable Future without Franco

> I think we are living through a process of destruction, of demolition, from which will arise something else... *Cría cuervos,* in a way, is a film about this process, the process of destruction and death.[18]

Cria Cuervos is the first film by Saura to be released after the death of Franco and the first to be based on a screenplay he had written alone. Though the film was shot while Franco was still alive, it's as if this incipient historical event enabled him to take a new step in asserting his creative independence. Yet the film is more informed by the death of the patriarch than by any liberation that was to follow. Saura continued to be extremely cautious about the political implications. Shortly after making this movie, he observed in an interview:

> The truth is that making a picture in Spain with politics as the main theme is unimaginable...at least at this time... I endeavor within the plots of my pictures for a closeness and some references to immediate reality, that which affects me directly, and in that sense I suppose politics hang on the backdrop, indirectly impregnating everything.[19]

Although the opening image of *Cria* was born in *Cousin Angelica,* it was transformed by Ana Torrent, whom Saura had seen in *Spirit of the Beehive.*

> That image took shape when I saw Ana Torrent... in ...*El Espiritu de la Colmena.* That girl fascinated me and certainly was the necessary stimulus for me to organize the scattered material. Ana, the star of the film, is obviously a sensitive and especially receptive girl who, facing the aggression of the adult world, has formed an isolated and personal world in which ... reality is such that it encloses memories with appearance of the present, desires and hallucinations that are confused with the everyday.[20]

From *Spirit of the Beehive,* Saura apparently absorbed not only Ana Torrent, but also the conception of childhood that she represented ("I have

never believed in the child's paradise; on the contrary, I think that childhood is a stage where nocturnal terror, fear of the unknown, loneliness, are present with at least the same intensity as the joy of living and that curiosity of which pedagogues talk so much"[21]), and specific traits she possessed in Erice's film: a precocious sensitivity and passion; an imaginative ability to fuse memory, hallucination, and present experience; and a dual capacity of being a victim of a hostile adult world and a murderous monster capable of patricide. Saura takes the primal conflicts that were only subtly implicit in *Spirit of the Beehive* and places them center stage.

When we see the opening image of a mother combing her daughter's hair before a mirror, we at first interpret it as an ordinary domestic ritual taking place in the diegetic present of 1975. When we learn that the mother is dead, we realize it is the girl's obsessive hallucinatory wish fulfillment, perhaps based on a reconstructed memory from the mirror phase when she first recognized her own Imaginary Signifier situated next to that of her mother. When we learn that the film is being narrated by the grown-up Ana from a future perspective of 1995, this opening image is pushed even further into the imaginary, being a reconstructed memory of an hallucination based on an earlier reconstructed memory. And when we consider the creative role of Saura, we remember that this opening can be traced back quite consciously to the final image of *Cousin Angelica* (*"Cría cuervos* was born in the final scene of *La Prima Angelica*"[22]) and also functions as an analogue to the earlier Ana's romantic reverie of herself and Frankenstein's monster in *Spirit of the Beehive.*

While Erice's Ana had fused movie monster, romantic stranger, and father into her own Oedipal fantasy that only hinted at incest and patricide, Saura's Ana boldly acts out the latter with her father, who compresses all three figures and whose identity as a high-ranking officer strengthens the political connection with the dying Franco, the ultimate Spanish patriarch. Unlike Luis and his cousin Angélica, this child refused to be restricted to the passive role of spectator; she rebels against all forms of repressive authority. In a sense, she is a budding female Hamlet starring in her own revenge tragedy that is played out amidst the rottenness of a corrupt family and state. Identifying strongly with her dead mother whom her father had brutalized and betrayed, Ana puts poisonous powder in his milk on the same night that he dies, in bed, with his mistress. It is only later when she tries to repeat the crime against her Aunt Pauline, who has attempted to fill the role of her absent mother, that she realizes the powder is harmless and that her murderous deeds have been confined to the realm of the imaginery—a restriction of action that undoubtedly applied to most of the children of Franco. Since these acts are performed in the name of love for her mother, whose death, betrayal, and substitution she has tried to avenge, Ana fails to see how she herself, in identifying so strongly with her mother, has become her most potent rival. Saura reinforces this nuance through casting, having Geraldine Chaplin play both the dead mother and the grown-up Ana who is narrating the story from an imagined future of 1995. We are left uncertain as to whether the cherished image of the mother has shaped the development of the daughter, or whether Ana's own image has been superimposed over that of the absentee.

In either case, it is the child's consciousness that dominates both the central character and the film, reversing the central premise of *Cousin Angelica* by demonstrating what happens when one can see oneself as a child, long after both parents are dead. In this film, both past and future, self and other, are situated in the realm of the imaginary, along with the conscious desire for patricide and the more disguised impulse towards matricide, which is displaced onto the aunt. Only the repressed incestuous love for the father remains unconscious and unacknowledged. Although the death of the patriarch helps to expand the consciousness of his

children, meaningful action is still only imaginable, not performed.

The Nest (1980): The Romantic Coupling of the Precocious Child and Childlike Adult

Saura's project of absorbing Ana Torrent as the embodiment of Franco's children and elaborating on her characteristics and conflicts from *The Spirit of the Beehive* is carried even further by Jaime de Armiñán in *The Nest*, a film I have written on more extensively elsewhere.[23] Although it was made five years after *Cría* and the death of Franco, it still places politics in the background. Yet now for the first time, both the incestuous and patricidal desires of the precocious child are liberated from the imaginery realm and acted out with a vengeance.

The film pairs a precocious thirteen-year-old girl named Goyita Mendez (brilliantly played by Ana Torrent) with a childlike middle-aged eccentric named Don Alejandro (skillfully portrayed by Héctor Alterio) in a tragic deviant romance. With Goyita as his Dulcinea, Don Alejandro is playing Don Quixote, blithely sallying forth on the great romantic adventure of his life. But once again the child is the controlling consciousness who manipulates the narrative, luring him into her own Oedipal drama where he is to play the role of murderous consort to her Lady Macbeth. Instead, he ends up the willing victim.

While the intertextual connections with *Don Quixote* are only implicit, the references to *Macbeth* are as explicit and pivotal as Erice's use of *Frankenstein*. The first time both the audience and Don Alejandro see Goyita, she is rehearsing her role out the film both characters quote crucial lines from dy Macbeth for a school performance. Throughout the film both characters quote crucial lines from the play, acknowledging the tragic subtext. In one scene the teacher directing the play confides to Don Alejandro that she chose Goyita to play Lady Macbeth because "she's wicked enough to understand the part"; he replies, "I've always thought that women were more intelligent than men, and more evil." Like the demonic Lady Macbeth, Goyita is a powerful female who manipulates one man into killing another. Her intended victim is a police sergeant, the top patriarchal authority of the city and the tyrannical boss of her weak father. But, since the Don decides not to load his weapon, the sergeant ends up killing the supposed assassin, with Goyita's father filling the role of passive witness. Both killer and victim are traditional patriarchs functioning as father surrogates. Goyita's tragic prototype, Lady Macbeth, had also seen a resemblance between her own father and the man she persuaded her husband to murder: "Had he not resembled My father as he slept, I had done 't" (II,ii,12-13).

Goyita is portrayed not only as a monstrous despot, but also as a highly sensitive young girl victimized by a repressive family and state. Her innate rebelliousness is aimed both at mother and father, and their respective doubles. She hates her mother, who dominates the family and henpecks the weak father, of whom she is contemptuous, worshipping instead the police sergeant to whom she is sexually drawn. Despite the hatred between them, Goyita is much like her mother, having learned how to manipulate her own man, Don Alejandro, sharing a secret contempt for her father for whom she also seeks substitutes, and responding equally passionately to the sergeant (with a burning hatred that probably disguises sexual attraction). She also adopts mother surrogates to double as models and rivals: her attractive young teacher with whom she's engaged in friendly competition (Goyita even forbids Don Alejandro to see her), and Don Alejandro's late wife, with whom she shares the passion of collecting bird nests and whom she envies, despises, and succeeds in replacing. The fact that both of these mother surrogates are perceived as rivals for Don Alejandro's affection further intensifies the Oedipal dimension of their romance.

Unlike *Cría*, which compresses all patriarchal aspects in a single character, here as in *Spirit of the*

Beehive they are separated into several figures: the weak, repressed biological father, who is as emotionally distant from the mother as he is from the children; the romantic stranger, whom she meets in secret and converts into an outlaw accomplice and for whose death she is largely responsible; the tyrannical militaristic officer, whose death she longs for and arranges but fails to accomplish and whose sexual appeal she refuses to acknowledge; and the monster (this time a caged eagle) whom she loves and trains and with whom she plays and strongly identifies as an instinctive predator. Resenting Goyita's keeping a bird of such imperial power, the sergeant confiscates the creature and lets it go. This act of aggression drives Goyita to confront him with full passion and to threaten him directly with murder. But the patricide as well as the incest are doubly displaced from the familial and civil patriarchs onto Don Alejandro, the romantic childlike outlaw.

Unlike the tragic subtext of *Macbeth*, in which the regicide committed by the overly ambitious couple destroys their psychic peace and brings havoc and corruption to the state, the consequences of the murder-plot in *The Nest* are more benign. Don Alejandro calmly accepts his fate, carrying an unloaded rifle, convinced that the sacrifice of his life is well worth the chivalric adventure, and Goyita survives the experience enriched, both emotionally and materially, and more firmly committed than ever to liberated eccentricity and deviant passion. When transferred to the context of post-Franco Spain, the myth of Macbeth, like that of Frankenstein, obviously takes on new meaning.

Two Films From 1977

By 1977 making a picture in Spain with politics as the main theme was not only imaginable, but also do-able — as *Black Brood*, the most explicitly political film ever produced in Spain, so valiantly proved to the world. Yet that same year also marked the release of *To an Unknown God*, another remarkable film that was equally impressive in its subtlety. Its emphasis on an unconventional form of sexuality, the obliqueness of its political implications, its highly intelligent, literate script, its modernist structure, its depth of characterization, and its brilliantly subtle performance by Héctor Alterio all suggest connections with *The Nest*, implying that the best indirect style of the Franquist period might continue to develop indefinitely in the post-Franco future. Although *Black Brood* and *To an Unknown God* represent opposite poles in terms of political explicitness, both films place children of Franco at their emotional and narrative center—focusing, like Saura's two works, either on the stunted childlike adult or on the precocious killer-child.

To an Unknown God (1977): The Childlike Adult as Deviant Lover

Like Saura's *Cousin Angelica*, Jaime Chávarri's *To an Unknown God* is the story of a lonely middle-aged bachelor who is obsessed with memories from 1936 that fuse eroticism with political violence, both steeped in the moral ambiguity of the wartime context; like Luis, José returns to the scene of his childhood, the grand estate where his father had worked, to explore these haunting recollections. But in Chávarri's film, the remembered events are far more mysterious and melodramatic: the boy witnesses the murder of Federico García Lorca by the Falangists on the same night and in the same garden where he had just had his first homosexual experience. The garden setting heightens the mythic resonance of this loss of innocence, poisoning the boy's emotional life with a double sense of guilt. Since his own sexual act could be seen as punish-able, particularly by repressive Fascists, the boy identifies with the victim, who was also associated with homosexuality. Yet, like the young girl in *Spirit of the Beehive*, he also irrationally feels partly responsible for the murder—particularly since his lover Pedro was obsessively in

love with Lorca.

Thirty years later José is still haunted by his love for Pedro who is now dead and whose memory has been fused with the ghost of Lorca, who has come to represent the tragedy of lost potential for José and his entire generation of Spaniards. This idea is dramatized when José performs his wardrobe ritual in the presence of Pedro's fetishized photograph while listening to tapes of Lorca's "Ode to Walt Whitman," which contains such lines as:

> That is why I do not raise my voice, aged Walt Whitman,
> against the little boy who writes
> a girl's name on his pillow,
> nor the boy who dresses himself in the bride's trousseau
> in the darkness of the wardrobe,
> nor the solitary men in clubs
> who drink the water of prostitution with nausea
> nor the men with a green stare
> who love man and burn their lips in silence.
> But against you, yes, pansies of the cities,
> of tumescent flesh and unclean mind,
> mud of drains, harpies, unsleeping enemies
> of Love which distributes crowns of joy.
>
> Against you always, you who give boys
> drops of soiled death with bitter poison.

As an internationally acclaimed modernist poet, Lorca sought to combine his exploration of consciousness and the mechanics of its creation with what was most traditionally Spanish—a combination that made him threatening to the Fascists as a boldly experimental artist, a free-thinking intellectual, a leftist, and a martyr. As if preparing to offer himself as a sacrifice, Lorca became obsessed with the Spanish idea of *duende* (avenging one's family honor):

> Spain is at all times obsessed with *duende*...because it is a country that opens to death. In all other countries death is an end. It comes and one draws the curtains. Not in Spain. In Spain a dead man is more alive as a dead man than anywhere else in the world: his profile wounds like a razor blade... The *duende* wounds and the tendency of that wound, which never closes, distinguishes the creative man.[24]

To an Unknown God powerfully demonstrates that Lorca is very alive as a dead man and as an open wound in the minds of José and his generation, including the creative men who produced the New Spanish Cinema—an idea reinforced by Saura's recent stunning adaptation of Lorca's *Blood Wedding*.

The adult José is a character with far more depth than Saura's Luis. While Saura's film explores the mental processes as they reconstruct past and present, Chávarri's work is a character study that examines a complex, multifaceted individual within a particular social context, one whose emotional and intellectual capacities seem so rich to the spectator, yet who experiences great unhappiness and an overwhelming sense of loss. José's job as a nightclub magician allows him to wear theatrical disguises and to remain in touch with the mysteries of childhood and creative transformation, even if his powers are largely based on illusion. Despite the emotional wounds from his past, he is supportive of his younger bisexual lover when he decides to enter politics, even though their relationship is problematic. His potential as a father is explored in a scene in which he teaches a young boy to ride a bicycle. The encounter is observed by José's sister, who at first fears that he may try to molest the child, becoming aware of her own horrid prejudice against homosexuals (which is probably shared by many spectators in the audience), she soon realizes that José is taking great pleasure in playing the father, a role for which he is well suited but that he will never be allowed to fulfill. This same issue arises again in his encounter with a confused teenager who lives in the same building and who seeks out José in his apartment, hoping to be seduced. It is José's very capacity to identify with the boy,

which enables him to act as a responsible adult, forcing the boy to acknowledge his own curiosity about the homosexual world yet refusing to exploit it. The relationship with the teenager is fraught with incestuous overtones since his mother has proposed a marriage of convenience to José. He rejects her as he has her son, for very different reasons, but with the same sensitivity to her feelings and needs. In all of these instances, José directly acknowledges his own homosexuality, realizing the price that both he and Pedro have paid for the latter's failure to face his own.

In certain key sequences Chávarri seems to draw on germinal images from *Cousin Angelica*, adapting and elaborating them to suit his own character and purpose. Saura's resonant image of the mother combing her daughter's hair before a mirror, splitting the self in two and combining past and present, is transformed into a sensual scene in which José brushes the long tresses of his sister, who sits bare-breasted in front of a mirror calmly gazing out the window while he speaks of the similarities between homosexual and heterosexual love. He performs this act of intimacy with a sense of ritual bordering on fetishism. We wonder whether there are incestuous desires or experiences in their past to parallel the incest we have seen enacted between Pedro and his sister. But the scene might also evoke a boy's fantasies about being a girl ("the boy who dresses himself in the bride's trousseau in the darkness of the wardrobe"). Perhaps the sister allows such intimacy because her brother's homosexuality has neutered him in her mind. Because José's images from the past retain their mystery, they remain more malleable and resonant than those of Luis for their use in the present.

Saura's pivotal scene of Luis searching for the child in his own mirror reflection is paralleled by José's wardrobe ritual, in which he slowly and methodically undresses in his bedroom, fastidiously putting everything away and then examining his wrinkles and sagging flesh in his bathroom mirrors. José's reactions to his reflection reveal a strange mixture of anxiety and acceptance, of narcissism and detached observation, as if, despite his regular detailed scrutiny, he is still always somewhat surprised by what he sees in the mirror. One imagines that when he closes his eyes, he returns to an Imaginary Signifier from the past; and yet, unlike the drab, inconspicuous Luis, José's appearance is always dramatically constructed to arouse a specific effect in the spectator, even when that spectator is himself. It is only in the wardrobe ritual that he fully relinquishes all disguise and faces the wounded child still obsessed with Pedro and Lorca.

In the film's final sequence this wardrobe ritual is repeated with one important difference — the presence of his bisexual lover, standing in the doorway fully clothed, observing José's private rites without speaking a word. The granting of such an audience may imply on José's part either a pessimistic indifference as he moves closer to old age and death, or another step toward greater self-revelation and intimacy. In either case, what these two sequences communicate so subtly is his realistic awareness of both the limitations and diminished prospects of his life and also the emotional and moral strength he still holds in reserve. José emerges as a creative man with a wound from the past which will never close, yet, unlike Luis Cano, he is not completely stunted nor entirely incapacitated for the present. Rather, he is a sensitive, complex, multidimensional human being still capable of performing limited acts of magic.

Black Brood (1977): The Monstrous Child As Precocious Fascist

Co-written by Manuel Gutiérrez Aragon (who was also director) and José Luis Borau (the producer), *Black Brood* is a blatantly antifascist portrait of a family of rightwing brothers, who sing in a church choir by day and perform acts of terrorism by night. In both ventures they are led by their fanatical mother Blanca, who is inspired by her late

Falangist husband — an absent patriarch evoking shades of Franco.

When asked about the political boldness of this project, Borau observed:

> After my success with *Furtivos*, I wrongly thought that I could do anything in my own country. Whenever I produce a film, I always do the one the director wants to do. Manolo said, I am going to do a film about rightwing terrorists, and I said, 'Okay, let's go!' When I asked him why were we making a film about rightwing rather than leftwing terrorists, he answered, 'Because I want to do a tragedy. It's more tragic to be a rightwing terrorist because, although leftist terrorists are also killing people, at least they are working in some way with history. But rightists are working against history. They have no future, so it's more tragic.' We did the film because I liked the ideas of the director. But things were not changing as fast as we thought after the death of Franco. When we opened with the film, the reaction was terrible — there were bombings, protests and threats. Even now, five years later, there are many towns and villages where the film is not shown.

The story focuses on the youngest brother Tatin who at fifteen desperately wants to be accepted as an adult member of the secret terrorist organization. To accomplish this goal, he must fulfill the three requirements of modern heroism, enunciated by his mother: to keep their path secret, to seek revenge against their enemies, and to be willing to sacrifice their closest friend or relative for the cause. Raised in a poisonous atmosphere that converts all of his heroic potential into fuel for fascism, the boy soon succeeds in becoming a callous killer.

As in many of the other films under discussion here, this work links the protagonist's sexual and moral development, which are both crucial to his quest for manhood. Tatin's first act is to avenge his brother's honor by raping the bookshop clerk who has accused him of taking part in the earlier raid. Not entirely successful, he flees the shop and encounters a young mysterious woman named Rosa, who befriends him and initiates him sexually. The unwed mother of a four-year-old son, Rosa offers Tatin a positive human alternative for his moral and sexual development, allowing him to play both the coveted roles of elder son and substitute for the absent father that he longs to assume in his own family. Ironically, she is the close friend and relative whom Tatin chooses to sacrifice to the fascist cause of his perverted matriarch. He takes Rosa to a deserted field and, just as they are on the verge of making love, he brutally beats her to death, chanting, "Spain, Spain, Spain." After depositing her naked body in a pit, he plants a tree on the shallow grave as a patriotic tribute to the New Spain.

While the link between fascist repression and sexual deviance in the children of Franco was only implicit in the other films under discussion, here it is made quite direct. In killing the woman who combines the roles of lover and good mother, Tatin not only rejects human tenderness but also his successful resolution of the Oedipal complex. He chooses to embrace a perverted life of sexual violence that he has absorbed with his mother's milk. Blanca's fanaticism is also identified with sexual repression. While she denies any sexual contact to her current spouse, her bedroom is dominated by a large photograph of her late husband in his Falangist uniform, which she has converted into a fetishized icon.

Annette Insdorf reads the dominance of the bad mother and the absence of the father in the New Spanish Cinema — a pattern that is also found in Borau's *Poachers*, Gutiérrez Aragón's *Sleepwalkers*, and Saura's *Mama Turns 100* — as a commentary on "the intimate connections between matriarchy and church." She concludes:

> Like the bloodthirsty Mama of *Black Brood*

who claims that 'rage can be holy,' these women suggest that the authority of religion in Spain is ultimately stronger than that of politics, for it incorporates transcendence.[95]

Indeed, the battle for Tatin's soul is waged by two matriarchs whose names suggest religious allegory — Rosa and Blanca, two rival versions of the Madonna. Tatin's ritualistic act of planting a tree over Rosa's grave has not only political significance, but also religious overtones, evoking the building of a shrine over the remains of a dead saint. As a young knight-errant, he still remains perversely loyal to his own Holy Mother and Courtly Lady, betrayal of whom is far more threatening than the act of murder.

Poachers (1975): The Chain of Brutalization Between The Devouring Parent And The Murderous Child

Opening in Madrid only two months before the death of Franco, Borau's *Poachers* presents the most powerful rendition of the tragedy of Franco's victimized, murderous children — a label that can be applied to all five of the film's principal characters. *Poachers* is a chilling dramatization of the chain of brutalization that passes from authority to subject, hunter to prey, and parent to child — a concept that was implicit in the myth of Frankenstein. Here it is linked very specifically to the political context of Spain, which Franco loved to describe as "a peaceful forest" but which Borau reveals to be a treacherous wood full of predators.

In describing his film, Borau quotes a line from Antonio Machado: "In the loneliness of the forests, the peasants become crazy," He elaborates:

> Cruelty is the most extreme in nature, and especially among the poor. The poor are not happy, beautiful and peaceful. Their poverty forces them to become cruel.... I wanted to show that the peaceful woods hid killing and cruelty. The Spanish title *Furtivos* has two meanings — illegal hunters or poachers, and also those who live their lives in a secretive way. Both meanings apply here — I wanted to show that under Franco, Spain was living a secret life. Virtually everyone in this film is a *furtivo.*

Populated with characters who are both poachers and prey, the film presents extreme acts of treachery, incest and murder, all submerged beneath a calm surface of dark beauty, dramatizing the corrosive effect of Franquist repression. *Poachers* is a masterpiece of artistic control and emotional compression, which has a haunting effect on the spectator.

Also based on a screenplay by Borau and Gutiérrez Aragón, *Poachers* shares the tragic pessimism and political anger of *Black Brood*, though expressed with far greater subtlety. The two stories are in many ways similar, but reach very different resolutions. Instead of the protagonist being a young boy, this time it is a childlike man named Angel, who doubles as the stunted adult and the murderous child. Like Tatin, he is also the object of a bitter struggle between two women, both associated with the church: a young girl named Milagros, who has run away from a convent school and whom Angel has picked up in town, has brought home to usurp his mother's bed, and eventually marries; and his dominating mother Martina, who is a true believer, but whose fanaticism is in the service of self-interest rather than being religious or political. Stirred by a passionate jealousy, she murders her daughter-in-law in the woods in order to reclaim possession of her Angel.

Again it is the women who are the aggressors and who wield the sexual power. After Angel gives Milagros some of his lunch, she gets him to buy her a new dress and then casually offers him her body in exchange. Once having experienced this sexual contact, Angel's desire to make love to her is so strong that it leads him quite literally to throw his mother out of her bed, promising his new love: "This is your house, and this is your bed!" After

Milagros has disappeared and Angel returns from searching for her in the snow, his mother removes his wet clothes, seductively trying to engage him in the incestuous acts they have shared in the past, but at the same time infantilizing him: "We're better off alone... I can see your pecker. I want to..." He pulls back in disguest, insisting that she leave him alone. Borau claims, "This is the most important scene in the film."

Instead of a house full of older rightwing brothers, Angel has the Governor, a middle-aged official who was raised and nursed by Martina, to whom he frequently returns with his friends and deputies and a hearty appetite for the home cooking and maternal affection he enjoyed as a child. In exchange for their menial services as cook and guide on the hunt, the Governor provides Martina and her son with meager financial assistance and shuts his eyes to their poaching. Despite his childish nature, he fills the role of the absent father, who is never mentioned, giving advice and wielding patriarchal authority over all aspects of their lives. Borau associates this kind of secret arrangement with the widespread corruption that was tolerated during the latter years of Franco — which might have ranged from poaching to incest. After witnessing Martina's attempted seduction of Angel and thinking back to certain subtle gestures and remarks between her and the Governor, we suspect that his relationship with his nanny might also have been incestuous. Thus, the Governor is not only Angel's older foster brother, but there is some slight possibility that he could also be his actual father. This complex network of incest lurks in the background, further complicating the actions and intensifying their primal power.

In contrast to young Tatin, everything about Angel's appearance, character and behavior is antiheroic. He allows himself to be dominated by his mother, he chooses a woman who admits she is in love with another man, and he lacks the courage to kill the hateful Governor, shooting his prize deer instead. As a final concession to his mother, he goes to the Governor and joins the official brotherhood of the Forest Guard — a step she has long urged him to take. When he returns home and discovers his wife's box of treasured mementos, he realizes that Milagros would never have left voluntarily without it and concludes his mother must have killed her. Like Tatin, he gathers his courage and calmly decides to commit murder, but he makes the opposite choice: this time the son will kill his mother in order to prove loyalty to his lover — the one person who has briefly humanized his poisonous life. Yet, in a sense, the crimes in both films are misdirected. If these young men were able to perceive and fully understand the political dimensions of their respective situations, then Tatin would be better off committing matricide against Blanca, and Angel, patricide against the Governor.

Once his decision is made, Angel follows the three requirements for modern heroism enunciated by Blanca in *Black Brood*. He takes his mother to church where he forces her to go to confession, granting her soul one last chance to be saved and then requesting a mass. When the priest asks for whom the mass is to be performed, Angel replies, "for my intention," keeping his path a secret. Although the priest assumes that the mass is for Angel's missing wife, it is really for the victim and killer in the murder to come. This final act of matricide simultaneously takes revenge on his enemy and sacrifices his closest relative, for Angel concludes they are one. The matricide is not restricted to the realm of the imaginary like the patricide in *Cría*, nor is it displaced onto another as the *The Nest*. Though we see Angel aim the rifle and hear the shot, we do not witness the actual killing. As with the catastrophes in Greek tragedy, the action must occur in the imagination of the spectator, where it becomes a far more haunting presence.

The power of *Poachers* lies not only in the story, with its extreme actions of incest and matricide, but also in the way it is told with such restraint in dialogue and visual style and with such masterful control over the performances and tone.

Consistent with Borau's preference for action over dialogue, there are several scenes with little or no conversation whatsoever. The dialogue that is present is sparse and cryptic, gaining impact through understatement. Take, for example, the final words exchanged between mother and son at the murder.

> Martina (kneeling in the snow with her back to her son): What are you going to do to me?
> Angel: You already know.
> Martina: Then go ahead and do it quickly, you bastard.

Luis Cuadrado's cinematography is subdued but stunning, capturing the natural light and subtle shades of the forest in winter and creating interiors that are painterly in composition and lighting. The overall effect is one of somber dark beauty. Borau claims:

> There are two reasons for the dark visual style — the forest and the suffering. When characters are searching for something, they are in darkness. This darkness is also found in Spanish paintings, where the subjects are usually in rooms without windows. When El Greco came to Spain, he painted without windows, too. Cuadrado was my best friend from the E.O.C. (Escuela Oficial de Cinematografía), which means we know each other very well and understood our ways of working. But we frequently argued because he always wanted to shoot in this dark style, yet some of my earlier films were comedies that needed more light. When I decided to make *Poachers*, I came to him and said, "Now I am going to do your film in darkness."

Another source of the film's power is the mythic dimension of its deep structure. Borau acknowledges that when he and Gutiérrez Aragón were writing the script, they consciously selected elements from fairy tales.

> Old fairy tales are still living because they respond to the eternal needs of the soul. So in this film, we include all the elements of a very old tale — the primeval forest, the King (in one scene, Martina even calls the Governor 'my King'), the witch, the old mother, and two innocent children lost in the woods.

The specific fairy tale evoked is, of course, Hansel and Gretel, in which a weak father is persuaded by a bad stepmother to abandon his poor children in the woods, where they encounter an evil witch, whose sugar house they try to consume. A struggle ensues between the old witch, who wants to devour the boy, and the young girl who tries to save him, resulting in the murder of the witch, who doubles for the bad stepmother. Thus, the desire for matricide lies at the center of the tale, making it (like the myth of Frankenstein) a favorite among abused and rejected youngsters and particularly appropriate for the children of Franco.

Despite this mythic subtext, the forest is demystified and treated quite realistically. The focus is on its inhabitants, the wild animals who absorb much of the human violence. Although the murders occur offscreen, the brutal violence against animals is depicted very graphically. Borau explains:

> The killing of animals shows the cruelty under the surface. In many movies violence is made enjoyable, but not in *Poachers*. Here the brutality against animals shows who is violent and who is bad. The mother's brutal killing of the wolf proves she is capable of killing the girl. We don't see the boy killing his mother, but we see him killing a deer. We never see the Governor and his men killing any people, but we watch them take pleasure in the senseless slaughter of animals in the hunt.

The she-wolf that Martina captures and chains on the night that Angel brings home Milagros is

particularly resonant in the way that it functions in the narrative. After being cruelly ousted from her bed, Martina goes out into the bitter cold night and brutally beats the animal to death, venting the rage she feels toward Milagros and foreshadowing her subsequent murder. Although the creature is clearly a surrogate for the young girl, as the embodiment of demanding possessiveness the wolf also represents Martina. In the following scene, the priest mediates at the business negotiation where Angel sells the pelt of the dead wolf, just as he later officiates when Angel marries Milagros and when he brings Martina to church for final confession. As the reigning church patriarch, he adjudicates the fate of all three she-wolves, reinforcing their triple identification.

Another source of the film's power is its excellent casting, which is very important to Borau. Relying almost entirely on faces and how people move, Borau uses the physical presence of the actors to define the characters. In *Poachers* virtually all of the principal characters look simultaneously older and younger than they actually are, reinforcing the monstrous chain of brutalization between parent and child and causing all of them to double as stunted adults and murderous children.[26]

Played by Borau himself as a caricature of the Franquist patriarch, the Governor is a stately middle-aged man with fastidious tastes, yet his petulant, self-centered manner and gestures are infantile. This doubleness has been marvelously described by Penelope Gilliatt:

> An upholstered, childish man, wearing spectacles and a striped scarf, with a fussy mustache, he treats the woman (Martina) with the sexual possessiveness of a toddler beating on the tray of his high chair for more porridge.[27]

Although Lola Gaos as Martina has the wizened face of an old hag, her small frame, slender limbs and agile movements are girlish. So short that (in Borau's words) "he is almost a dwarf," Ovidi Montllor's Angel is boyish in stature, yet his dour expression, defeated walk, and passive slouch make him seem as withered as an old man. The contact with Milagros brings him to life, awakening the child that lies buried within. Even after she is gone, when the Governor tells Angel, "You're better off without her," we see this rebellious spirit erupt into a tantrum.

Supposedly an under-aged school girl, Alicia Sánchez's Milagros has a face, as one critic has astutely observed, that looks more like thirty. When her head is shaved as a punishment for having run away from the convent, one can't quite decide whether her baldness makes her look infantile or aged. In either case, she looks grotesque, which is accentuated by the context of the wedding ceremony where this physical transformation is first revealed and where Angel repeatedly tries to hold her veil in place, as if to restore her former more appealing image.

In the final scene of the film, Angel goes through Milagros's box of treasures and stares at a photograph of her taken when she was a child. The camera moves in for a close-up on this image of lost innocence —the only sign of innocence in the entire film and one of the few existing in the New Spanish Cinema.

* * *

In this essay, I have tried to show how the filmmakers who grew up as children of Franco have dealt with this persona in their own artistic development and more particularly in their films. As we have seen, most of the works under discussion divide this construct into two figures — the sensitive, precocious child and the stunted childlike adult. If one places the two within a developmental model of the divided self, then one perceives the tragedy of lost potential. What emerges repeatedly in these films is a struggle to achieve some meaningful form of maturity while maintaining contact with the spirit and vitality of the imprinted child. This project is aided by a rich use of intertextuality and mythic subtexts, which extends the resonance of the struggle by placing it within a larger tradition

that includes other periods and cultures. Thus the filmmakers appear to be successors to a long artistic heritage, which makes them sophisticated members of a younger generation.

Though the emphasis in the films is most frequently on psychological issues — e.g., Oedipal guilt, matricidal or patricidal impulses, obsessive fantasies — they are always politicized by being placed in specific reference to the Franquist context. The same is true of sexual issues. Being forced perpetually into the role of Franco's children was undoubtedly emasculating. In these movies childlike men all have sexual conflicts related to incest, homosexuality, or pedophilia. None of them ever becomes a father, as if they dare not compete for the position of patriarch or feel too strong an aversion for the role. Though all the films discussed here were written and directed by men, they frequently portray the imprinted child as a young girl who identifies with a male creature, drawing on his physical strength in order to act out her own repressed rage. This sexual strategy is similar to the ones used by Lady Macbeth (who persuaded her husband to perform the murders she had conceived) and by Mary Shelley (who clearly identified with the monster yet chose to make him male) in key mythic subtexts that underlie two of the films. The choice of this kind of sexual reversal either by a male filmmaker or a female author probably reflects childhood uncertainty of one's sexual identity and potency. Possibly even more telling, the dynamic of sexual reversal also arises repeatedly in the displacement that occurs betwen patricide and matricide. Whether male or female, the children of Franco must have felt impotent and repressed, identifying all forms of sexual expression with rebellion against the parental authorities in the family, church and state.

Despite this overwhelming handicap, the filmmakers of the New Spanish Cinema have valiantly succeeded in transforming this rebellion into a highly refined art that is fuelled by primal forces from childhood, yet has proved capable of treating sexual and political issues with a rare maturity and passion.

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NOTES

[1]All subsequent quotes from Borau in the text will be taken from this lecture at USC on April 14, 1982.

[2]"It is true that there has never been a cinema industry in Spain. Cifesa, founded in 1932 and long since defunct, was the only company run on remotely Hollywood lines. In the silent era films were often made by businessmen ignorant of cinema.... During the Second Republic, while the bulk of films continued to be kitsch (bandits, bullfighters and gypsies), there were some that betokened awareness of social and political realities; and this tendency continued in the Republic during the Civil War. Franco's victory, however, ushered in a state-supported cinema of white telephone comedies and films in praise of the armed forces." Roger Mortimore, "Reporting from Madrid," *Sight and Sound*, 49:3 (Summer 1980), 156.

[3]From an interview I did with Saura on August 20, 1978, previously published in "Carlos Saura: The Political Development of Individual Consciousness," *Film Quarterly*, 32 3 (Spring 1979), 16. Many of the ideas in my discussion of the two works by Saura will draw on this earlier article.

[4]*Ibid.*, 15-16.

[5]In addition to the films directed by Saura, the other films discussed in this essay which were produced by Querejeta include *Spirit Of The Beehive* and *To An Unknown God*.

[6]André Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema," in *What Is Cinema?*, Vol. I (Berkeley and Los Angles: Univ of Calif. Press, 1967), p. 29.

[7]*Poachers* is the last film shot by the late Luis Cuadrado before he became ill and eventually went blind. Other films discussed in this essay which were photographed by Cuadrado are *Spirit Of The Beehive* and *Cousin Angelica*.

[8]Though Borau did not produce *To An Unknown God* or *The Nest*, he collaborated on earlier films by these directors — as producer on Jaime Chávarri's documentary *Estado De Sitio* (1971) and co-writer and producer of Jaime de Armiñán's black comedy *My Dearest Señorita* (1972), both of which were el Iman projects. While he was still Borau's

student at the E.O.C., Chávarri wrote the screenplay for *Al Escondite Inglés* (1969).

[9]The novel was written in 1818 by Mary Godwin Shelley, whose mother Mary Wollstonecraft died giving her birth, whose father William Godwin never forgave her, and whose husband Percy Bysshe Shelley (whom she has explicity identified with Dr. Frankenstein), was both the loyal disciple of her father and the loving devotee of her dead mother, at whose graveside he proposed marriage. At its emotional center, it is a moving tale about a creature who, despite having an enormous intellectual potential, is emotionally and morally crippled by the cruel, irresponsible rejection of his creator. Out of blind pain, this victimized child is transformed into a murderous monster, who seeks revenge against the father which leads ultimately to patricide. The tragic poignance of this rejected child comes through in every version of the story, even in a parody like *Young Frankenstein*, and helps explain the great survival power of the myth and its adaptability to so many different genre, media, periods, and cultures.

[10]The triumph of patriarchal power is also reinforced by Whale's visuals. Practically all of the art deco sets are dominated by strong verticals, and the rooms are divided into tall, narrow spaces. Both the laboratory watchtower where the monster comes to life and the tower of the windmill where he is destroyed are particularly phallic, as are the long poles carried by the men on the hunt, which are later replaced by torches of the same shape. No matter what human gestures may animate them, these recurring geometric forms, and their symbolic associations to patriarchal power, remain as rigid and inescapable as the grotesque form of the monster.

[11]Saura interview, *Film Quarterly*, 18.

[12]Enrique Brasó, "Nouvel entretien avec Carlos Saura (A propos de la Cousine Angélique)," *Positif*, No. 162 (Octobre 1974), 34.

[13]*Ibid.*, 33.

[14]Saura interview, *Film Quarterly*, 20.

[15]Saura interview, *Positif*, 34.

[16]Saura interview, *Film Quarterly*, 20

[17]Saura interview, *Positif*, 34.

[18]Angel S. Harguindey, "Entrevista con Carlos Saura" in *Carlos Saura's Cría Cuervos...* (Madrid: Elías Querejeta Ediciones, 1975), p. 125.

[19]*Ibid.*, pp. 126-27.

[20]*Ibid.*, p. 129.

[21]*Ibid.*

[22]*Ibid.*

[23]"El Nido," *Film Quarterly*, 35:1 (Fall 1981), 34-41.

[24]F. García Lorca, as quoted by Michael Hamburger in *The Truth of Poetry* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1969), p. 203.

[25]Annette Insdorf, "Spain Also Rises," *Film Comment*, 16:4 (August 1980), 16.

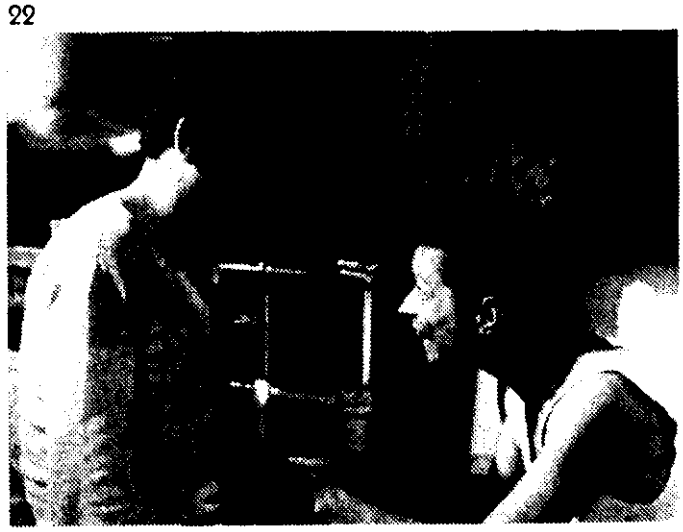
[26]The only exception is the actor who plays the former boyfriend, who is merely a conventionally handsome rebel and whose selection Borau now considers to be a mistake: "At the beginning of the shooting, we did a scene where we needed to have a photograph of this character. So I found this man who looked right for the part. But on the first day that he came to shoot a scene, I realized it was a mistake."

[27]Penelope Gilliatt, "The Current Cinema," *New Yorker*, 54 (March 27, 1978), 121.

21

A Un Dios Desconocido (1977)

22



Ovidi Montillor and Lola Gaos in Furtivos (1975)

Furtivos*

Mario Vargas Llosa

I

Now that the barriers imposed by censorship have begun to fall, it is finally possible to see formerly prohibited movies in Spain. The border film festivals that in the past allowed somewhat curious and moderately well-to-do Spaniards to find out about worldwide cinematic trends are now part of history. The crumbling of those barriers — may they soon be completely gone — will open up new horizons to everyone in Spain. It will undoubtedly act as a stimulus for Spanish filmmakers who, until recently, were badly treated by the censors.

But although nearly everyone welcomes this free circulation of movies, it means that something will nevertheless be lost — that is, the mythical status that censorship automatically conferred upon its victims. Because of censorship, when they saw a movie, Spaniards felt a heightened pleasure that came from tasting forbidden fruit, from transgressing a taboo and from confronting a danger. In this sense, the Spanish filmgoer with enough money to take that monthly trip to a little town along the frontier felt superior to the Scandinavian, German, and Latin crowds. For them, seeing movies was merely entertainment, as harmless and meaningless as watching a soccer game or visiting the zoo. But for a Spaniard, seeing movies was far more unusual and precious: it was a multidimensional activity involving courage, some expense, occasional long trips and an investment of time and imagination.

The censors did more than just prohibit and cut movies. Their more subtle function was to sow doubt and to poison the spectator with suspicions, thus causing him to fantasize. Who could put his hand in the fire and swear to what he was seeing? What were the differences between this movie and the original? How many and which scenes had been suppressed? Had the dialogue been respected or was it changed to such an extent that it was exactly the opposite from the screenplay? Had the present version been impoverished or enriched

* This article is appearing for the first time, courtesy of Ediciones Turner of Madrid.

by the censors? The viewer's imagination would be busily at work along, of course, the least edifying lines: the brother and sister in the film, weren't they in reality lovers transformed into relatives through editing? Between the door that closed behind the beautiful couple in one scene and the springlike awakening in the next, what shameful couplings had seared the screen in the original film? A joke that circulated in Madrid in the 1950s concerned *The Naked Jungle* (1954), a movie in which Charlton Heston fought against a host of Amazonian ants. The gist of the joke was that in the original film, the ants were whores. That was the most serious joke in the world: the censor, not the director, the scriptwriter, or the actors, was a film's true creator. Even if the censor did not actually touch a film, just the fact that censorship existed had the effect of inverting what was seen on the screen. Everything was evaluated in terms of censorship, including whether the spectator believed or did not believe, approved or was angered by a movie. From the viewer's standpoint, a film's intrinsic elements —its themes, structure, photography, and acting —had secondary importance. The decisive factor was always the final touch with which that supreme institution, operating in secret council, had crowned the film. To the spectator everything that the board of censors had approved, with or without changes, was in itself suspect (so-so, bad, or awful), while everything that it prohibited was trusted (good, very good, or exceptional).

People used to go and see what had been banned across the border in Perpignan, Andorra, Collioure, Le Boulou, Prades, and Banyuls. For the benefit of pilgrims from Catalonia, every weekend these towns bedecked their dark locales and offered full film programs. Within the space of two days, it was possible to enjoy eight or ten movies that had been banned or were about to be. In sagacious doses, the program always combined examples of the two *bêtes noires* of that implacable institution: sex and politics (or, as diehard conservatives would say: pornography and subversion). In this way, all palates were sated. Everyone could satisfy his or her most intimate appetite while maintaining appearances (an enthusiast of pornography had a revolutionary alibi and vice versa). With just a few minutes' break, it was refreshing to pass from the lugubrious fornications of *Last Tango in Paris* to the heroic masses of *The Battle of Argel*, or from a healthy collective epic such as *The Battleship Potemkin* to the fetishized sacrileges of Buñuel. What ideology had separated, censorship combined.

You would never go alone to those festivals but with friends, among whom there was always some seasoned film critic who enlightened the rest on how to view the films. (The key critical word of the day was cinematographic "discourse." Discussions of film "grammar" and "syntax" were just beginning.) Thus going to the movies meant not only traveling to but talking about movies. On the whole, the spectacle provided food for thought and stimulated other processes. It was a way of killing more than one (cinematic) bird with one stone. It also gave the opportunity to visit Romanesque churches lost in the snowdrifts of the Pyrenees, to tempt Lady Luck at the roulette wheel, and to explore the gastronomic specialties of the Rouseillon region. In short, movies gave impetus to a cluster of unrelated activities that brightened one's horizons while satisfying vices and curiosities — gambling, gluttony, tourism, history, and cosmopolitanism. It thereby enhanced the artistic, political, and erotic formation of those who undertook the excursions.

II

The main victim of film censorship is not so much spectators (since they have access to the above-mentioned compensations if they reside near an open border) as it is film professionals. For those who are involved with films in any capacity, the working conditions created by the institution of the scissors present a jigsaw puzzle if not a nightmare. What validity can the judgment of a film critic have

when he knows that the movies he is analyzing have been mutilated or adulterated and when he is prohibited from even mentioning the surgery or alchemy that has been performed? Like the general public, the film critic ends up evaluating not the director's choices, but the actions and omissions, the likes and dislikes of the censor.

The director suffers even more than the critic. From the outset and because of the nature of cinema itself, he or she is condemned to depend upon many elements in order to realize his vision —the budget, crew, technology, distribution channels, and commercial consideration — and in addition must confront an omnipresent and unpredictable, all-powerful and merciless adversary. We cannot even guess how many dozens of potential talents were suffocated by the strait-jacket of censorship during the Franco years. This is not to suggest that censorship provides the magical explanation for every failure. But what is certain is that its anachronistic nature, its blindness, capriciousness, and absurdity distorted cinematic work in Spain in fundamental ways. In innumerable cases, it impeded young filmmakers from taking risks and from finding out whether they were capable of failing on their own terms. In this context, what is heartening and even miraculous, one more proof that the creative spirit is indomitable and capable of burning in the dampest shadows, is that even in such adverse conditions there were those who managed to evade the dangers in the mine field of Spanish cinema, those like Berlanga, Saura and Erice who created personal and unsubmissive works that were also admirable from the artistic point of view.

In my opinion, José Luis Borau stands among this handful of filmmakers who overcame and transcended the difficulties of the medium and produced a work whose intelligence of form and profundity of subject appeal to spectators all over the world. While Borau's movie reflects the contingencies of the current Spanish situation, it also explores a deeper and more permanent state of existence and does so in a new way.

It seems that *Furtivos* was recently banned in Peru, where it was supposed to headline a festival of new Spanish cinema. For this reason, the entire festival had to be canceled. That's instructive. Not long before, the head censor, a brave man, had declared: "If I am a supporter of censorship of newspapers, how can I not support censoring movies?" What in *Furtivos* could have offended this gentleman of such firm convictions? The "eroticism" of the film? The brief shot of the rump and minimal breasts of Milagros that appear and disappear in an instant? Peruvian censors are usually pretty magnanimous about the amount of breasts and behinds that their audiences are allowed to be exposed to on the screen; some semi-pornographic movies are tolerated (as long as they are stupid). The politics, maybe? However much they may seem to be transparent for Spaniards, the political allusions in *Furtivos* would be remote to Peruvian spectators. Even the position of Governor (we call him a prefect) isn't easily understood. It would probably be indecipherable to the censors, who are not known for being excessively perceptive. Then why would they have banned the film in Peru? To the Spanish censors as well as to those of other countries, both in the past and in the future, the one thing that pierces like a thorn in their throats, the one thing that is consistently incompatible with their function and which, in effect, sooner or later ends up corrupting conformity is: artistic talent.

III

The richness of a work of art comes from the diversity of elements that compose it and the number of possible interpretations that it admits. *Furtivos* is a complex movie because it is many movies at once. What it shows can be understood in very different ways, according to the audience that sees it. First of all, it is a passionate story made up of episodes linked by a kind of fatality that keeps the spectator fascinated, hanging in suspense, and totally involved. In great, good, and beautiful

stories such as this one, everything is so perfectly integrated — characters, settings, situations, dialogue — that the most excessive and indescribable things seem to be not only probable but certain, necessary, inevitable.

At the same time, in its ferocity and truculence the plot woven by José Luis Borau and Manolo Guttiérez Aragon is profoundly Spanish. It combines disparate elements — unbridled instincts, strong individualism, extreme cruelty, primitive innocence, and a stratified and prejudiced social context where political and religious institutions function as if oblivious to reality. This combination has always been the mark of the realistic tradition in Spain and the distinctive feature of Spanish narrative forms.

That realism consists, on the one hand, in describing worlds where individuality prevails over the social order and, on the other, in highlighting those experiences that, because of their excessive nature, do violence to the norms and revolutionize the established order. That's what happens in *Furtivos*. Although isolated figures living outside of the mainstream predominate in the film, an institutional context and an historical world are present that also shape the events. A sociological critic would have no difficulty in demonstrating that the movie exemplifies critical realism as defined by Lukács — an embodiment of the alienation endemic to morally and politically repressive class societies permeated by discrimination, corruption, and hypocrisy. The story of *Furtivos* could be that story. But by the same token, it also deals with the underside of human behavior. It can also be interpreted as an exploration of the tumultuous and destructive level of the instincts, that dark and irrational zone that Bataille called the "cursed part" of humanity. In the sombre adventure of Martina and Angel, one is aware of something more profound than the depiction of individuals in a backward society. One is also conscious of the presence of spontaneous and uncontrollable forces that operate through the characters. Like fate in a Greek tragedy, these forces transform them into mere puppets dancing on the strings of desire.

But *Furtivos* is also a love story. If it were not for that elementary passion that the gamekeeper feels for Milagros, he would never have risen from the level of primitivism and sordidity in which he was vegetating, nor would he have wrenched himself from the incestuous arms of Martina. His love is a superior enslavement wherein he discovers sexual pleasure, exalted feelings, and even humor. In fact, if it were not for that passion, the story would not have been quite credible. Angel's passion also infects Milagros. A former reform school inmate, a street-wise girl in love with a fugitive, Milagros is also transformed by Angel's straightforward passion, shedding both cynicism and coarseness. This element sweetens the more extreme scenes and makes them acceptable to the spectator. Angel's love humanizes the story and makes it more normal. It is an optimistic ray of light in that night of abandonment and unhappiness that is life in *Furtivos*. But in that asphyxiating cave where neither solidarity nor delicacy exists, the blossoming of love is no mere embellishment or seasoning added to a terrible drama in order to make it more palatable to the general public. It is more than anything else a way of showing the ambiguity of man, the extent to which good and evil are inextricably mixed.

IV

Furtivos is also a meditation on the relations between man and nature as described, longed for, sung, and analyzed in philosophy and the arts. The movie purports to refute a line of thought that descends from Rousseau in the Eighteenth Century, according to which natural man is pure and society corrupts. In the Nineteenth Century, Tolstoy continued this idea in a mysticism based on the notion of returning to the earth for spiritual purification. In our own century, Pavlov extended the notion by recommending as a form of therapy that homosexuals be sent to work in the country — a place without vices. But in *Furtivos* contact with nature is

no guarantee of moral health. Natural man appears in the film as an example of the human spirit darkened, twisted, and hardened by nature. That beautiful forest whose trees are red in the autumn, where deer stand erect, incarnates peace only for those who come to visit, like the Governor and his friends. But for those who live in the heart of the woods and feed off its fruits and animals, in that beautiful setting is enacted a war without truce which imposes a sordid life of beast-like toil and solitude. In the world of *Furtivos*, the simple routine and familiar acts required to live in close contact with nature do not forge clear minds, limpid souls, and uncomplicated feelings. On the contrary, it is urban men like the bandit and the Governor who seem simple in psychology and predictable in behavior. The city and its institutions have domesticated their instincts, which, in the case of Angel and his mother, lie just below the surface dominating them to such an extent that they do not appear as very different from the wolf that Martina kills with an ax, or the hog that helps Milagros find truffles.

It is an interesting coincidence that at the same time that this movie, with such a pessimistic view of man in nature, opened in Spain, a voluminous study by Professor LeRoy Ladurie, "Montaillou, Occitanian Village from 1294 to 1324," appeared in bookstores in France. In this work Borau's vision is echoed and confirmed by an example from history. In Ladurie's minute reconstruction of life in an Occitanian village in the Thirteenth Century, a village marked first by the Albigensian heresy and then by the Inquisition, the image of natural man is no less pitiful than the one found in *Furtivos*. In both cases the conclusion is the same: If there is such a thing as civilization, and if being civilized means subordinating one's instincts to reason, then civilization is far from nature and is, in fact, a product of the city alone.

V

It is remarkable that *Furtivos*, one of the cruelest stories in Spanish cinema, is told soberly and with moderation. There is nothing in it that is superfluous. Even the briefest shot fulfills a function and contributes to our total understanding of what is happening. Borau's reserved style of narration leads him to eliminate all of the crucial episodes from view: the murder of Milagros, the death of the mother, and the probable suicide of Angel. These events are suggested instead of shown. Throughout the film Borau implies, induces, leaves trails and allows the audience's imagination to do the rest, while the camera remains focused upon accessory things. Take, for example, the presentation of meals or the hunting scenes. It is more frequent for the spectators to observe the characters seated at a table or even killing animals than to see them killing one another or making love (in fact, the first time we don't see Angel and Milagros make love at all; the second time we only glimpse them in bed). Nevertheless, it is the latter events that give life to the story.

This is not to suggest that the film's narrative system consists only of significant omissions and hidden facts. Borau also uses transposition, a device that we might call narration by proxy. In the movie Martina's ax strokes which kill a she-wolf substitute for (and make us "see" metaphorically) those with which she strikes her daughter-in-law; Angel's shooting of a graceful deer replaces the scene in which he kills his mother. This method of narration is effective because it is not obvious. That is because the images of the wolf's and the deer's deaths are not only symbols but have their own reasons for existing.

They are graphic manifestations of Martina's and Angel's states of mind and of their reactions during key scenes in the drama (showing, for example the mother's fury when the intruding woman first arrives,

or revealing Angel's anguish over the disappearance of his wife). Symbolism is further dissimulated by the nature of the photography which is extremely precise and shows everything with great sharpness. What one is shown is so real that it does not seem to represent repressed images but is exhaustive in and of itself. Nevertheless, the apparent straightforward objectivity of the camera is as misleading as the seeming lack of external emotions on the part of the protagonists. Both the protagonists and the images give off a secret fire. The spectator sees what they show with such exactitude (the lighting above all else skillfully accentuates the presence of things and gives them a disturbing closeness) that he or she has the impression of seeing the *entire* story. Actually, what is (splendidly) photographed and placed before the viewer is only the tip of the iceberg: the true story of *Furtivos* takes place in the hidden recesses of human actions, a mysterious realm of secret ideas and motivations that human eyes cannot fathom.

Spanish actors are often accused of being theatrical and declamatory. It is true that this tendency exists, but the reproach is not justified because this tendency probably comes from the language itself, rather than from the individual actor or actress. Spanish (like Russian or Italian) is an oratorical language. Nevertheless, in Borau's movie one sees how relative and false such generalizations can be. The acting in *Furtivos* is as restrained and interior as in any Bergman movie. In actuality, the actors almost don't talk. And when they do, they mumble, murmur, swallow a few expeditious words without any change in expression (as in that marvelous sentence that condenses the entire fatalistic personality of Martina: when she finds out that her son is going to kill her she says, "Then hurry up, you bastard"). They are often quiet, as if disgusted with the idea of having to talk. The contained and unadorned acting style of *Furtivos* provides a counterpoint to the extreme character of the story. It is another way for the director to downplay its excessiveness and to make it presentable.

From the technical and artistic standpoint, José Luis Borau has achieved many things in this movie. But perhaps what we should be most grateful to him for is that its enormous commercial success proves that "auteur" films are not necessarily at odds with the tastes of mainstream audiences who can appreciate a complex and daring work when it is conceived with imagination, subtlety, and rigor.

VI

A few years ago José Luis Borau came to Lima with the idea of producing a movie. He had a terrible time. A general threatened to shoot him. The lady who was then Minister of Culture treated him very badly and nearly struck him. The bureaucrats in different government offices shuttled him back and forth without giving him the information that he had requested. But Borau is a man without resentment and with a sense of humor. He was enchanted with Peru and remembered, above all else, a fat man who invited him to lunch and sang arias from zarzuelas over dessert.* As if nothing had happened, he took a plane to try his luck in Venezuela, where — such is the nature of the film industry — things came out even worse. But with the same sportsmanship and tenacity, he kept insisting until finally, after having been associated as producer, scriptwriter, animator, or director on a number of high-quality cinematographic undertakings, he has come into his own and culminated that trajectory with a work that places him among the best directors of today. Let us hope that this is only the beginning of more fruitful adventures.

Barranco, Peru, April 1977

*zarzuelas - songs from Spanish musicals that date back to the Golden Age.

Translated by Katherine S. Kovács

Mario Vargas Llosa, a prize-winning author, born in 1936 in Arequipa, Peru, published his novel, Time of the Hero, *in 1963. In this and subsequent first works, Vargas Llosa used dazzling montage effects to create frescoes of contemporary Peru. He has lived in France, England, the U.S., and Spain, where he has published all of his books. In addition to short stories, novels, and more recently, plays, Vargas Llosa wrote and directed his first film,* Captain Pantoja and the Special Service, *in 1978.*

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Alicia Sanchez and Ovidi Montillor

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Lola Gaos

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Lola Gaos, Ovidi Montillor, Alicia Sanchez

Furtivos (1975)

26

Darren McGavin in *B. Must Die* (1975)

27

Jose Luis Borau in *Furtivos* (1975)

28

Jose Luis Lopez Vazquez in *Mi Querida Senorita* (1972)

29

David Carradine in *On the Line, Jose Luis Borau director (1983)*

Without Weapons

José Luis Borau

> Steinbeck would be nothing without American weapons. I think the same is true of Dos Passos and Hemingway. If they had been born in Paraguay or in Turkey, who would read them now? A country's power determines who the great writers are. As a novelist Galdós is often on a par with Dostoevski, but who has heard of him outside of Spain?
>
> Luis Buñuel, *Mi último suspiro*[1]

With these words — similar to Baroja's on the same subject[2] — Buñuel puts his finger on a sore spot, a sensitive area that bothers every creative person who is citizen of a weak country. And what makes matters worse — worse, that is, for any young Spanish moviemaker, whose plight will be discussed here — is that this is true not only for literature but also in other areas of artistic endeavor, starting with film, despite the almost mythical prestige of Buñuel himself.

For our hypothetical young Spanish director whose country not only lacks guns but completely disappeared from the world stage two hundred years ago, the problem — the sore spot — has some characteristic symptoms. The world virtually ignored us until the upheaval of the Spanish Civil War, when attention was focused upon us not, I suspect, because of the Spaniards themselves, but because those events were seen as the "dress rehearsal" for everything that subsequently took place in Europe. Even today, for many educated people (and of course, I am not necessarily including critics in that category), Cervantes is the only name in our classical literature worth remembering, Picasso learned how to paint in Paris, and García Lorca was the best poet we had in 1936. When others evaluate us, the adjectives "quixotic," "goyesque," and — in recent years —"buñuelesque" — are invariably applied. All of our works are fitted into this framework by will or by force, for these words are used to mask an incredible lack of knowledge of and interest in Hispanic culture.

Franco's death did not improve matters much. To a certain extent it even made things worse. Spain is no longer the victim of a Fascist dictatorship. Our books and our films don't arrive abroad bedecked with the palm of martyrdom. No one has to listen to us because it is humane or politically expedient to do so. The waters have finally returned to the river bed: the situation has returned to "normal." This same scenario will be played out, albeit for different reasons, with Cuban films the day after Castro surrenders, or with Brazilian films if one day its directors forget about oppression and about the Macumba, if they endeavor to speak on equal footing with the audiences (or the critics) of the developed nations.

The examples mentioned above as well as those offered by Juan Gris, Miró and Dalí in painting, Falla, Casals and Yepes in music, and Arrabal in drama prove that a Spaniard can attain international recognition only by leaving home. Unless, of course, he is lucky enough — in literary terms, that is — to be killed by a Franquist bullet, like our blessed Lorca.

"What should I do then, should I go or should I stay?" the young director asks himself, conscious of the burden of his national heritage. Buñuel, the teacher of us all, according to the critics (even though most of us did not see any of his movies until we were close to thirty and had developed our own ideas of what we wanted to do), did not hesitate in making his decision. He asked his mother for money and went to France to shoot the screenplay that he had written on the beach with his friend Dalí.[3] He was well aware —as, of course, was Dalí — that a film like *Un Chien andalou* needed a showcase, a place where it could be offered and "sold" to the public, and the best showcase in those days was Paris. If the movie had been made in Madrid or Barcelona, the experiment would only have made the spectators laugh (that is another bitter truth) and resulted in indifference on the part of the rest of the world.

But today, as our young director knows, the times are quite different. To begin with, movies have become an economic venture that far exceeds the good will or financial resources of one's mother. Moreover, it is no longer possible to cross the border with a suitcase full of money. As to the possibility of finding financing abroad, in view of the general economic situation and especially the worldwide crisis in the movie industry, trying to raise money for a movie anywhere at all is like attacking the proverbial windmills. One has also to compete with the dozens, even the scores, of native moviemakers who fight in their own backyard with superior arms, of which the most powerful is their own language.

Over a half century ago, motion pictures ceased being a poetic series of silent images without national identity. Those films were without a homeland. Even the ones that appeared to be the most "realistic" seemed to reflect the vision of a common land loved by everyone (which is why the Russian revolutionary movies were so effective and have remained unsurpassed to this day). But this is no longer the case. Nowadays movies speak, both literally and figuratively. They have geographical, political, and literary dimensions — they are nationalistic in ways that jump out at you from the very first frame. Today's movies have not only a homeland but even a passport which the viewers demand to see whenever they sit down in the theatre — or what's worse, even before they enter. They have become like those custom agents who have favorite countries whose visitors are received with a warm smile, and others which they find bothersome and suspect, and whose natives are promptly disinfected or vaccinated. As if this were not enough, if one of those unwelcomed foreigners claims to speak about their lives in their own language, the spectators — or rather, those who have set themselves up as their direct representatives, the distributors and critics — will ask the newcomer for his documents and will inspect his suitcases, concluding, with an air of superiority, "No, none of this is useful here. You don't understand

what the distinguishing characteristics and idiosyncrasies of our people (they really mean 'audiences') are. We are very special (they really mean 'superior'). Why don't you criticize your own country? You'd have enough to dig up there."

And as if this weren't enough, audiences have become incredulous, aloof — they resist being seduced. As André Breton ruefully remarked to Buñuel, "People are no longer shocked by things anymore."[4] Boldness, daring, and nonconformity are not noticed in a society that is by definition disrespectful, whose general rule is to provoke those that will allow themselves to be provoked. The desire to be in the vanguard and to experiment has been relegated to the special effects department, where studio heads try to disguise old stories with new thrills and frights. This is just the opposite of what artists like May Ray and Picabia tried to do in their youth. Given this present situation then, how can one hope to express a personal viewpoint, to be heard above all of this gibberish?

Even though he is aware of these conditions, the young director is ambitious and thinks that he has as much spirit and as much right to be heard as anyone else. He is therefore ready to take his chances, to embark on the adventure and, if necessary, to burn his ships.[5] Upon taking everything into consideration, he decides that the Spanish cinema is no picnic either. There is a lot of competition for few resources and meager rewards. As Camilo José Cela noted, after exposing ourselves to envy and laughter in the public square, the prize that awaits us on top of the greased pole is often nothing more than a rotten sausage.[6]

In addition to all of these obstacles which are a direct result of the lack of weapons mentioned by Buñuel, there are other challenges facing our young filmmaker, what we might call his personal "demons" — confusing and terrifying moral concerns which are difficult to confront. These are indirect consequences of the same national weakness.

Our young creator has heard *ad nauseam* since his high school literature classes (probably taught by priests during the "nationalist years"[7]) that an author could not be without his roots. He must remain forever stuck in his native soil. Torn out of it, he would not be able to produce fruits of flavor and substance. His products would lack authenticity; they would be, at best, imitative works, completely empty shells. Nothing can replace mother's milk. Without it, they would say, we would all end up being exiles, perpetual idlers, in foreign courts. That is what happened — they used to tell us —with Blasco Ibañez[8]. In his novels set in Valencia you could actually touch the lampreys and smell the onions in a market, while his cosmopolitan stories soon became hollow and outdated.

But this line of reasoning never convinced our young man, perhaps because lampreys were repugnant to the touch and onions made him cry. Moreover he had always felt that if the human species had until now triumphed over the other species it was because of precisely the opposite reason — that men had no roots, or if they had some sort of roots, they could dispense with them more readily than any other living beings. No creature, no plant — one might even add no rock — had adapted so successfully to changes in climate, elevation and environment as had man. This was, of course, even more true on the emotional level than on the plane of mere physical survival. Man had an unsurpassed capacity for resisting suffering. He had come and gone whenever and wherever he pleased and ended up as the unchallenged master of innumerable situations. What then, is all this talk about man's roots? Could it stem from a desire to control us, a fear that if we fly freely we may become infected and it would no longer be possible for us to return? Or is it a belief that a foreigner cannot adequately evaluate and judge what he sees around him? On the contrary, many times the natives — the ones with roots — lack perspective and are unable to see beyond their own noses. One has only to consider such artists as Conrad, Nabokov, Kafka, Joyce, Lang, Ophuls, Hitchcock, and, in the Hispanic world, Cortázar, Neruda, and Buñuel him-

self, who in one way or another were all travelers, living and working where they wanted or where they were able, dealing with familiar as well as with foreign themes, at times even in languages that were not their own.

In any event, this warning serves as an omen or a fatal legend for the young filmmaker. For even though he doesn't accept it, he acknowledges that a danger exists when he is warned in similar terms, this time by people very different from the priests of his childhood. He would not for all the world want to be reduced to the sad state of wandering exile, or, in the best of circumstances, to become a hybrid, neutral offical like any representative of UNESCO or the UN, who is obliged to draw up the minutes of events that take place in remote areas of the world merely because that is his job or function.

This obligation to draw up the minutes, to record testimony, is something that our young man does not completely understand. Some years ago, a director, a fellow countryman, wrote an article in a foreign newspaper in which he affirmed that it was necessary to "bear witness" with our works, "since films" — he said — "will either be the testimony of our times or they will be nothing." If we were to accept this, it would mean that good movies were not the ones that had been made with contemporary audiences in mind (those who, after all, have prior claim to them) but rather the ones that addressed the audiences of an unknown future time. This, in turn, would imply that filmmakers have very optimistic expectations about the survivability of their own works, which is a colossal falseness, since no one can bear witness in a valid and meaningful way for tomorrow if they have a vested interest in doing so today. Actually, the opposite is probably true: the less a creator is interested in offering testimony, in bearing witness as to what is taking place today, the greater will be the value of the information that he or she gives. Unintentional testimony is often more authentic and useful. Is there any fuller description, even in *contrario sensu*, of the spirit of the American Great Depression of the thirties than the crazy comedies concocted by Hollywood during that period? *The Grapes of Wrath* dramatizes the extreme and external — although real —vicissitudes of the most unfortunate stratum of that society while the "Mother Goose" stories of Frank Capra (as a director-turned-critic fortuitously called them)[9] perfectly reflected the ideals and intimate desires of the whole nation at that precise moment, even if they were lies, or precisely because they were lies. And in a few years, something similar will probably be said about the childishness of Lucas's and Spielberg's movies, which are faithful reflections — although not all that attractive — of prevailing patterns of regressive behavior in this country.

But the arena where the director's demons wage their most effective battle and nearly defeat him is where they invoke the creator's sacred obligations towards his people. The director should remain tied to the land of his birth not because it is more difficult to fight abroad or because he risks losing his strength and inspiration — selfish matters, to be sure, and therefore contemptible — but because he belongs to his fellow countrymen body and soul. From them he has received life and nourishment. He owes them the fruits of his labor. He must help the people understand themselves by offering them an image of themselves. He must supply them with the arms to help them overcome their present prostration. To seek other horizons means renouncing and forgetting them, abandoning them to their sad fate, which is the sin of lack of solidarity, or of unforgivable treason.

Faced with such arguments, the young director's heart will shrivel and so will his guts. He is in love with his people. He breathes freely among them. He savors life's meaning with them better than with anyone else, and the very thought of betraying all those innocent people working and smiling around him — most of whom lead a precarious life to boot — seems monstrous. And this feeling is intensified if our young man belongs to one of the national minorities of the various countries of Spain.[10] To

them his commitment is even greater — to defend them against being swallowed up by the central power and language. In this case, the possibility of expressing himself as a moviemaker at any level beyond that of the subsidized documentary is so rare as to be almost nonexistent. For his true people — supposing that for him they are one group and not all Spaniards — do not constitute a large enough audience to even be called by the horrible name of a "market." But he, although he knows it, prefers not to know it, and to blindly trust that some day the enthusiasm and sacrifice of everyone (authors and people alike) will make a miracle happen.

Thus the risks and doubts accumulate. They incline him to make that Numantine decision and to remain at home.[11] But rebuttals — based on logic and egotistical temptation — begin to spring to mind, undermining this resolve. In the first place it is not all that clear that if you go away you stop helping your people. Did Picasso hurt Spain or Miró undermine Catalonia in any way by leaving? Who could dare to make such a claim? Could anyone say that about Buñuel, even though he changed his nationality? On the contrary, aren't they the best proof in the world (and maybe the only one aside from the bullets and blood of the Civil War) that we Spaniards are still alive and breathing? Would it have been better if they had stayed home? How far would they have gone? Who would have recognized the importance of their contributions? Whom would they have helped?

Besides, if — as we have already said — our young director believes that he has the talent and the boldness to address any audience, the situation becomes extremely clear. By going away he may betray his native people, but by staying home and burying his creative capacities, he is betraying the rest of humanity. Ultimately, it becomes a question of numbers, unless, of course, one believes that one's own people is worthier and more deserving than all others, in which case our nationalist feelings would have crossed that often blurred boundary that separates nationalism from fascism.

Nevertheless our man does not dare to take the first step. He prefers to remain undecided forever, waiting to see what will happen. On the other hand, at best —or at worst — he is not as young as he has been claiming up until now, only because his movies are still being included under the rubric of the "New Spanish Cinema," in order to distinguish it from the "old" (Franquist) one. In reality, he is actually almost fifty, a true "child of Franco" whose best years were spent in that limbo where little could be accomplished, aside from arguing with the censors and waiting. Given this situation, where can he go?

Then begins the self-deception. Who knows, maybe he'll win a prize at Cannes or some other important festival and his work will arouse interest. That's what happened to Bergman, Kurosawa, and many others. And there's always the possibility of being included in a retrospective of third world cinema. After all, one shouldn't be too conceited. The important thing now is to concentrate on one's work and to try to reach universality by delving into the particular, as has been said many times.

But of all of them, this last fallacy is perhaps the greatest of them all. It is the ultimate pacifier, devised to calm the creative urges of disinherited authors (you know, the ones from the countries without weapons), whose analysis would require another whole article in itself.

José Luis Borau was born in Zaragoza in 1929. After graduating the University with a degree in Law, he went on to receive a diploma from the Escuela Oficial de Cinematografia (Official Film School) of Madrid, where he later became professor of screenwriting. An independent director and producer, Borau has received numerous awards at international film festivals. One of the films he produced and wrote, My Dearest Señorita, *was nominated for an Oscar as best foreign-language film in 1973.*

NOTES

[1]Luis Buñuel, *Mi último suspiro* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janes S.A. Editores, 1982), p. 216.

[2]Pio Baroja, *Desde la última vuelta del camino* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1944). Although he is not known outside of Spain, at the beginning of the century Baroja transformed Spanish narrative. His influence was immense and continues even today. At the time of Baroja's death, Hemingway himself publicly and formally acknowledged his debt to Baroja, whose austere and direct style he considered to be the model for his own work. In spite of Hemingway's assertions, none of his American students or critics has been curious enough to look into this connection.

[3]Buñuel himself mentions this in *Mi último suspiro*, pp. 102-3.

[4]Ibid., p. 112.

[5]The expression to "burn one's ships" is associated with Hernan Cortés' Mexican campaign when he did indeed burn his ships, cutting off all retreat so that he and his men would either conquer the Aztec Empire or die in the undertaking.

[6]For some critics, Cela is the most important author to have appeared during the Franquist period. In this passage, Borau is paraphrasing a passage from Cela's *La Cucaña* (Barcelona: Libro de Memorias, Ediciones Destino, 1951), which is based upon a play on words. In Spanish a smoked pork sausage is a *chorizo*; a pork sausage of lowgrade or inferior quality is a *chorizo de burro*. But the word *chorizo* has the additional meaning of a ropewalker's pole, hence the image of finding the sausage on top of the pole.

[7]This is the name given to the first post-Civil War years in Spain, the period from the end of the fighting until the beginning of the Second World War.

[8]Vicente Blasco Ibañez was a Spanish author whose books were made into Hollywood movies that resulted in great box office successes for Rudolph Valentino (*Blood and Sand, The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*) and Antonio Moreno (*Mare Nostrum*). He also wrote Greta Garbo's first two American movies (*The Torrent* and *The Temptress*), the second of which also featured Moreno.

[9]Borau is referring here to Juan Antonio Bardem, Spanish director who published an article in *Le Monde* in 1955 that was widely discussed in cinematic circles in Spain. Before working in films, Bardem was a critic for a university magazine called *La Hora*, where the comment on Frank Capra first appeared in a review of Capra's *It's A Wonderful Life*.

[10]In Spanish the expression is "las Españas," used to designate the different nationalities that compose Spain.

[11]This expression refers to the decision taken by the inhabitants of the Celtiberian city of Numantia who chose to set their city on fire and to throw themselves in the fire rather than to surrender to the besieging Roman troops in 140 B.C.

Those Obscure Objects of Buñel

Naomi Greene

Linda Williams. *Figures of Desire: A Theory and Analysis of Surrealist film.* Urbana/Chicago/London: University of Illinois Press, 1981. 234 pp. $21.50

As is almost always the case with new critical approaches, recent trends in narrative theory and psychoanalytic film criticism have led to a renewed interest in certain figures of the past — Luis Bruñel, who so clealy plays with narrative and who almost taunts us with psychological meaning, has found himself the subject of several articles written from these perspectives.[1] Now, he is the focal of a book-length study — Linda Williams' *Figures of Desire: A Theory and Analysis of Surrealist Film* — written from the double viewpoint of Metzian semiology and Lacanian psychoanalysis

Although the title of Williams' book indicates a concern with Surrealist film in general, the author discusses other Surrealists, in particular Robert Desnos and Antonin Artaud, fairly rapidly (focusing, oddly enough, on a scenario by Artaud rather than on the only film in which he actually had a hand, *La Coquille et le clergy man* and then proceeds to her study of Buñuel telling us, perhaps somewhat controversially, that Buñuel's *Un Chien andalou* (1929) and *L'Age d'or* (1930) are "more mature and properly surreal" than Artaud's *La Coquille et le clergyman* or Desnos' *Etoile de mer.* Through an extended and meticulous analysis of these two early Buñuel films (done in collaboration with Dali), in addition to two made towards the end of his career, *The Phantom of Liberty* (1974) and *That Obscure Object of Desire* (1977), Williams' goal is essentially to show in what ways Surrealist film and in particular the films of Buñuel form a discourse akin to the discourse of the unconscious or of dreams, not only in the way it uses condensation and displacement (which Williams argues, find their cinematic equivalents in metaphor and metonymy) but in the way that it "transgresses" a more familiar and more readily accessible discourse by subverting what we perceive as normal diegetic codes. Even before Buñuel, she maintains, "Artaud and Desnos saw that only through the rupture of the established codes of narration could Surrealists hope to achieve film texts that could

imitate the structure of uncon-scious processes as revealed in our dreams" (p. 32). In elaborating this theory, Williams bases much of her argument upon ideas put forth by Christian Metz (in his analysis of film language) and by Jacques Lacan's theory of the self, of language, of the unconscious and the imaginary, concepts which Williams explains clearly and then applies to the films under examination. In one of the less theoretical parts of the book, Williams notes the historical links between Lacan and the Surrealist movement: apparently, as a young man Lacan not only read, but contributed to, Surrealist journals such as *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution and Minotaure.*

Although Williams' argument is tightly-woven and coherent throughout, I nonetheless have the impression that the parts of the book inspired by Metz are more convincing, and certainly less controversial, than those which have Lacan as their source. While at times Williams re-phrases—almost inevitably, I think—fairly conventional notions concerning certain films (for example, critics have long underlined the importance of certain formal shapes such as stripes, boxes and holes in *Un Chien andalou,* just as they have analyzed how surrealist film undercuts normal diegesis and conventional genres, or examined the ways in which love and death are inter-woven in Buñuel's films), at other moments her extraordinarily thorough analysis of filmic figures offers a new reading of sequences long relegated to certain clichés. This is especially true of her striking and original analysis of the famous opening sequence of *Un Chien andalou* in which, after shots of a razor being sharpened, we see a cloud slicing the moon followed by an eye slit by a razor. Using the figures of metaphor and metonymy, Williams observes that what distinguishes this filmic metaphor from other metaphors—such as those, for example, associated with Eisenstein—is that what would "commonly constitute the tenor or comparing element of the figure—in this case the moon—is given first" (p. 70). What happens, therefore, is that the "diegesis. . . serves the metaphor. Everything happens in this metaphor as if the formal resemblances between the moon that is 'sliced' by the cloud and the woman's round eye elicits the human action of slicing the eye" (p. 71). The result of this reversal is that the figure, i.e., what could be called the "reversed" metaphor, "dictates the sadistic and violent content."

Williams is equally good at showing how the different sections in *L'Age d'or,* which is based on metonymy rather than metaphor, are interwoven in ways which have not been analyzed before. She convincingly argues that "each separate section seems to exist both as diegesis in its own right and in figural relation to the rest of the film" (p. 137). As she remarks, "discontinuous segments of apparent diegesis are associated only by partial spatial or temporal contiguities." This, in turn, leads to a striking analysis of what is perhaps the distinguishing characteristic of the way this film is made:

> Thus, the Surrealist metonymy of *L'Age d'or* treats each new diegetic segment as if it were the metaphoric vehicle to the tenor [the comparing element of the figure] of the previous segment. But the contiguous, metonymic nature of the association does not force an abrupt leap to a connotative plane the way most metaphors do (p. 139).

But it is not only in such close readings that Williams excels: she also establishes some very persuasive categories for Buñuel's films, categories which take us far away from more traditional studies which group Buñuel's films according to place of origin, theme, etc. For her, *That Obscure Object of Desire* has affinities with *Un Chien andalou* because of its "obsessively narrow focus, metaphoric structure, and parody of psychoanalytic language," while *The Phantom of Liberty* ts, and deliberate disturbances of normal diegetic processes all reveal a language of the unconscious expressing what she sees as unequivocal meanings. For example, even if one goes along, however uneasily, with the idea that the latent meaning of the

opening metaphor of *Un Chien andalou* "can only be castration," I think it takes someone who has already been convinced by Lacan to believe that the metaphor itself is also "a metaphor for difference, for the fundamental lack-in-being that marks the entrance into the Symbolic and structures desire" (p. 86), or that the male characters in *L'Age d'or* and in *That Obscure Object of Desire* really wish to possess themselves, to fill the lack in their own being, through their longing for the other.

But it says a great deal about the merits of this book—about its clear, lucid style even when dealing with difficult subjects, its ability to inform and interest the reader—that one is challenged to read on even if one disagrees with the author's conclusions. Linda Williams has successfully performed the very difficult task, in the case of Buñuel's early films, of shedding fresh light on films which have been discussed and analyzed at length by several generations of critics. And she has established a coherent and plausible reading for a very elusive and slippery film—*The Phantom of Liberty*—whose surface accessibility hides a labyrinth of meanings. My only serious reservation comes, perhaps, from Williams' slightly dogmatic tone which may be, after all, the other side of its author's evident passion for, and commitment to, her subject. But it is a tone which is not really open to multiple interpretations (after all, a psychoanalytic reading need not exclude other approaches) and doesn't deal well with the playful side of Surrealism or the jokes of a Buñuel. (We know that jokes are psychologically revealing, but when a couple in *The Phantom of Liberty* is erotically aroused by postcards which are subsequently revealed to depict Paris monuments rather than nudes, is it really necessarily true that "transgression [the taboo cards] itself becomes erotically charged"? Can't it be that Buñuel is simply having fun?) This tone, in the final analysis, is harsh toward earlier critics or critics whose views do not coincide with those of the author. The suggestions that certain earlier critics of Surrealism are more or less "forgivable" than others brings us back to the violent quarrels marking the heyday of Surrealism when certain members of the group, such as Artaud, were virtually "ex-communicated" by Breton. How sad that critics assume such relentless positions concerning a movement which was to liberate man from the chains of past culture and of his own psyche.

A last orthographical cavil: René Clair's ghost is *Le Fantôme du Moulin-Rouge.*

NOTES

[1]See, for example, Susan Suleiman's "Freedom and Necessity: Narrative Structure in *The Phantom of Liberty* (*Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, Summer, 1978), or Paul Sandro's "Textuality of the Subject in *Belle de Jour.*" (*Substance*, No. 26, 1980).

Naomi Greene,, Professor of French at the University of California at Santa Barbara, has just finished René Clair: a Reference Guide *to be published by G.K. Hall and a translation of Marc Ferro's* Cinéma et histoire *to be published by Palimpsest Press.*

30

31

Tristana (1970)

The Last Word

Katherine S. Kovács

Luis Buñuel. *Mon dernier soupir,* Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, S.A., 1982. 317 pp.[1]

Although on one level the title that Luis Buñuel has chosen for his autobiography, *Mon dernier soupir (My Last Breath),* expresses a melancholic awareness of the imminence of his own death, in typically Buñuelian fashion it also alludes to the manner in which the book was composed. If not actually dictated, *Mon dernier soupir* developed out of conversations that Buñuel had with his friend and longtime collaborator, Jean-Claude Carriere.[2] It therefore bears the stamp of informal conversation. Buñuel is recounting an oral history with all that the term implies.

Buñuel's decision to write *Mon dernier soupir* was prompted by a growing awareness that he was losing his memory. This discovery was a source of anguish. As Buñuel writes: "... memory is what makes up a life .... Our memory is our coherence, our reason, our action, our feelings. Without it, we are nothing" (p. 11). Recalling his mother, who in the last years of her life was totally senile and unable to recognize her own children, Buñuel feels impelled to capture his memories before time and old age completely obliterate them.

The filmmaker's desire to preserve the past shaped the contents and determined the organization of his autobiography. He devotes the most attention (four chapters) to the period of childhood and young adulthood (as compared to only one which deals with the years of his most intense filmmaking activity, between 1960 and 1977). He spends two thirds of the book on the period which culminates with the Spanish Civil War, when he had made only three of the thirty-six movies that he would direct.[3] But as Buñuel repeatedly states, the movies are of secondary importance, mere reflections of the man and of his life experiences: "I have hardly any desire to review all of my movies and to say what I think of them — it's not for me to do that. Besides, I don't think that one's life should be equated with one's work..." (p. 244).

Nor does Buñuel see his life as divided into a series of stages or organized around major events. Rather than establish a chain of events, he tends to

ramble and to give the most prominence to anecdotes, stories, pranks, and jokes. As in *Nazarin*, *The Milky Way*, and other movies that were constructed by juxtaposing a series of loosely connected episodes, so in the autobiography he interrupts the chronological sequence of events and includes peripheral reminiscences or even wholly unrelated chapters. These delightful detours deal with some of his favorite pastimes — drinking, smoking, dreaming (an entire chapter is devoted to his recurring dreams), etc. He recalls women whom he slept with and others whom he didn't, enumerates his predilections (de Sade) and dislikes (academic film critics), and even reprints the remembrances of his sister Conchita.[4] In some ways, Buñuel resembles the picaresque hero who wanders the world having "adventures," or at least, unexpected encounters. In an aside to one of his asides, he remarks: "Digression is my natural way of telling stories, along the lines of the Spanish picaresque novel..." (p. 205).

Because of Buñuel's tendency to imitate the loose structure and offhanded manner of the picaresque novel, there is little information that is actually new in the autobiography. We find out more about Buñuel's life from Francisco Aranda's *Critical Biography*,[5] which draws upon interview material as well as conversations with and letters from Buñuel. Aranda's book also contains excerpts from an unpublished autobiographical sketch that Buñuel prepared for the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1938, in which he presents a more complete account of his activities and pursuits than in *Mon dernier soupir*.[6] After a reading of the latter work, certain events remain obscure, such as why Buñuel had a falling out with Irving Thalberg and left MGM, or even what he was doing in France during the Spanish Civil War.[7] Moreover, throughout the book are a number of errors in names, dates, and titles.[8] We do not know whether these are attributable to gaps in Buñuel's memory or to the fact that the book was dictated by a Spaniard to a Frenchman who incorrectly transcribed some names and titles.[9]

But even if the book gives few new facts about Buñuel, it does offer some new insights. In the memories, dreams, and scenes that he randomly selected, it is possible to perceive the source of many images that recur with variations throughout his films.[10] Likewise, it becomes clear that some of his most memorable screen images dramatize certain feelings, attitudes, and beliefs that were instilled in him as a young child. We become especially aware of the way in which religious ideas of sin, taboo, transgression, and death shaped his conceptions of love and sexuality.[11] Because so many of his childhood memories resemble images or scenes from his movies, we are left to wonder whether those movie images merely reflect Buñuel's childhood or whether they have retrospectively taken the place of real memories, fixing them upon celluloid in a cinematic time warp that fuses memories, movies, dreams, and memories of movies in surrealistic fashion.

Ultimately what strikes the reader of Buñuel's autobiography is what strikes the viewer of his films. From his earliest works to the most recent ones, Buñuel has elaborated a series of personal images and myths that, while taking on additional resonances over the years, have not substantially changed. Although these images and scenes are easily recognizable, they can never be exhaustively explained because they are based upon a web of personal associations. Regardless of where he made his movies or when, the language the actors spoke or the subjects that he presented, they are all rooted in the filmmaker's sensations, emotions, predilections, and ideals.

Perhaps it is for this reason that in spite of the fact that he has lived in exile for more than half of his life, Buñuel has remained quintessentially Spanish. As Carlos Saura once wrote:

> To know Luis, the easiest way is to be Spanish. People like him are found throughout our history. They were the guerilla fighters, those who were persecuted by the Inquisition during the Middle Ages, mystics illuminated by a

> shining faith, martyrs and selfless heroes. Spain is full of such people who, most of the time, respond solely to the cause of individualism and anarchy...."[12]

Over the years Buñuel has remained faithful to the spirit of individualism and anarchy. He has consistently denounced all individuals or groups which claimed to have a monopoly on the truth — be they Surrealists, Communists, nationalists, or even anarchists. What he calls his abiding commitment to "fanatical antifanaticism" (p. 283) has led him to reject all political, social, or artistic movements which offer only an illusory and phantom freedom.[13] To all of these he has opposed the true freedom of the imagination, "our primary privilege" (p. 216). In his commitment to the imagination, in his staunch antifanaticism, Buñuel recalls the stance of other Spanish artists such as Cervantes, Goya, Quevedo, or Calderón who also joined stark and often grotesque images of reality to fantastic visions in order to create a "superreality" out of which a new and often critical vision of the world emerged.

It is indeed ironic that because of his fidelity to this Spanish "realistic" tradition which unites fantasy and satire while affirming the falseness of reality and the truth of dreams, Buñuel was able to make only two movies in his native land. During Franco's regime, when dogmatism and fanaticism reigned in Spain, two generations of Spaniards were denied access to his movies. As Saura recalls, in the 1950s

> to speak of Buñuel was to evoke a phantom, someone either too unreal because of all the myths surrounding him, or totally unknown. Only a part of the young generation waited impatiently to make contact with him. (When he came to Spain to make *Viridiana.)* Some of us dreamt that the great moment of Spanish cinema had arrived. No one suspected what a scandal the film would cause at the Cannes Film Festival. We thought that it would soften the Spanish censors by showing that they were powerless to contain current film movements. But we were mistaken.[14]

It was not yet time for Buñuel's brand of Spanishness. *Viridiana* was banned in Spain, delaying any easing of censorship there for some time to come.

Since the death of Franco, Spaniards have been able to reestablish contact with Buñuel. In his films they rediscover parts of themselves and see played out certain historical conflicts and cultural obsessions. But while his sensibility remains Spanish and his ties to Spanish cultural traditions and heritage remain strong, it would be difficult to find direct evidence of Buñuel's influence on contemporary cinematic trends. Although he partakes of the same traditions as today's cineastes, his movies reflect his own experiences and those of his generation. Buñuel is therefore both familiar to and removed from today's filmmakers who are preoccupied with forging a style and means of expression appropriate to their own contemporary reality. Thus Buñuel's connection to Spanish cinema is indirect and yet profound. It recently received official acknowledgement when, on November 17, 1982, the Spanish Supreme Court finally granted Spanish nationality to *Viridiana.*

NOTES

[1]*Mon dernier soupir* was first published in French and then translated into Spanish with the same title, *Mi último suspiro (Memorias) (My Last Breath),* Barcelona; Plaza y Janes, S.A., 1982. The book appeared in English after this review was written with the title *My Last Sigh* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1983).In my review, I have taken all quotations from the original French edition. The translations are my own.

[2]Although he does not specifically say that he dictated the book to Carrière, given Buñuel's failing eyesight, it seems most likely that he did indeed "talk" rather than write his memoirs. On the introductory page he notes: "I am not a man of letters. After long conversations, Jean-Claude Carrière, faithful to what I told him, helped me write this book."

[3]Although Buñuel mentions having produced some movies in Spain in the 1930s (and even hints that he directed some of them), he never officially acknowledged having done so.

[4]As he notes, Conchita's text was first published twenty years ago in *Positif.*

[5]Francisco Aranda, *Luis Buñuel: biografía* crítica (Barcelona: Editorial Lumen, 1969); translated by David Robinson, Da Capo Press, 1976.

[6]A comparison of the wording of the material which Aranda quotes in his book with what Buñuel uses in *Mon dernier soupir* reveals a number of similarities. Perhaps Buñuel himself consulted the earlier autobiography in order to refresh his memory.

[7]In a single sentence he mentions having been engaged in a diversity of tasks ranging from compiling documentary footage on the Civil War to acting as a public relations or propaganda officer for the Republican government, to fund-raising, to transporting spies to Paris (p. 196).!

[8]Some of the more blatant errors in dates include Buñuel's reference to his return to Madrid in April 1930, two days before the King left and the Spanish Republic was declared (this actually took place in April 1931, as Buñuel notes elsewhere); Buñuel's second trip to Hollywood during the Civil War took place not in 1939 (p. 218), but in 1938, when MGM had decided to make two (not one) movies about the Civil War. Some of the famous people incorrectly situated or identified include Spanish actress Lily Damita (who had completed a movie in Hollywood before Buñuel ever arrived). (I am indebted to José Luis Borau for indicating a number of other errors in names and in titles found throughout the book.)

[9]The same mistakes are found in both the Spanish and French versions. Neither one has an index.

[10]In the chapters dealing with his childhood, Buñuel remembers the beggars who would gather to receive alms on Fridays (shades of *Viridiana*). He recalls the tremendous impression that the sight of a dead donkey rotting on the road made upon him as a child, and describes in considerable detail the drum-beating ceremony held in his town every Easter (its echoes may be heard in the climactic scenes of *L'Age d'or* and *Nazarin*). As a child he was captivated by the myth of the Virgin of Pilar who, according to prevailing legends, had restored the amputated leg of one of her believers.

[11]Buñuel states that he tried to translate his awareness of the secret relation between the sex act and death into images for the first time in *Un Chien Andalou*, when "the man caresses the naked breasts of the woman and suddenly his face becomes that of a cadavre" (p. 22).

[12]Carlos Saura, "Le retour en Espagna," *Positif*, No. 42 (novembre, 1961), 27.

[13]Buñuel has made this a central issue in a number movies. And on this particular point *Mon dernier soupit* does offer new perspectives. The filmmaker calls *The Milky Way* his "promenade through fanaticism" (p. 303). But his target is not religious fanaticism alone. He seems to associate these heretical sects with Surrealism, noting that "in spite of his aversion for all religions, Breton and the other Surrealists recognized that they had certain npoints in common with the heretics" (p. 301). Buñuel considers *The Milky Way*, *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, and *The Phantom of Liberty* a sort of "Medieval triptych" (pp. 307-8) on this subject, showing the extent to which political and social as well as artistic liberty are illusory. Even the title of *The Phantom of Liberty*, originated in *The Milky Way* when one character notes, "Your liberty is only a phantom."

[14]Saura, "Le retour en Espagna," p. 28.

Filmography*

Jaime de Armiñán

1969 - *Carola de día, Carola de noche*
1970 - *La Lola no vive sola*
1972 - *Mi Querida señorita (My Dearest Señorita)*
1973 - *Un casto varón español*
1974 - *El amor del capitán Brando (The Love of Captain Brando)*
1975 - *Jo... Papá*
1977 - *Nunca es tarde (Never too late)*
1978 - *Al Servicio de la mujer española*
1980 - *El Nido (The Nest)*
1982 - *En Septiembre (In September)*

Luis García Berlanga

1951 - *Esa pareja feliz (The Happy Couple)* (script with José Antonio Bardem)
1953 - *Bienvenido Mr. Marshall (Welcome Mr. Marshall);* (script with Bardem)
1953 - *Novio a la vista (Fiancé in Sight)*
1956 - *Calabuch (Rocket from Calabuch)*
1957 - *Los jueves, milagros (On Thursdays, Miracles)*
1961 - *Plácido (Plácido)* (First of many scripts written with Luis Azcona)
1962 - *La Muerte y el leñador (Death and the Woodcutter)* (episode for portmanteau production *Las 4 verdades) (The Four Truths)*
1963 - *El Verdugo (The Executioner/Not On Your Life)*
1967 - *La Boutique* (shot in Argentina)
1969 - *Vivan los novios (Longlive the Newlyweds)*
1973 - *Tamaño natural (Lifesize)* (not shown in Spain until 1977) (Title in France: *Grandeur nature)*
1978 - *La Escopeta Nacional (The Spanish Shotgun)*
1980 - *Patrimonio Nacional (National Heritage)*
1982 - *Nacional III (National III)*

José Luis Borau

1963 - *Brandy, el sheriff de Losatumba (Brandy)*
1964 - *Crimen de doble filo (Double-edged Murder)*
1969 - *Al escondite inglés (Hide and Seek)* (Borau—scriptwriter, producer: Ivan Zulueta—director)
1972 - *Mi Querida señorita (My Dearest Señorita)* (Borau—scriptwriter, producer; Jaime de Armiñan—director)
1974 - *Hay que matar a B* (B Must Die)
1975 - *Furtivos* (Borau—director, producer, actor, and co-writer with Manuel Gutiérez Aragón) (Title in England: *The Poachers)*
1977 - *Camada Negra (Black Litter)* (Borau—screenwriter, producer; Gutiérez Aragón—director)
1978 - *El Monosabio* (Borau—producer, scriptwriter)
1979 - *La Sabina (The Sabina)*
1983 - *Río Abajo (On the Line)* (shot in Laredo, Texas)

Jaime Chávarri

1971 - *Pastel de sangre (Blood Pie)* (one episode, co-directed with Bellmunt, Martínez-Lázaro, and J.M. Valles)
1974 - *Viajes escolares (School Trips)*
1976 - *El desencanto (Disenchantment)*
1977 - *A un dios desconocido (To an Unknown God)*
1979 - *Dedicatoria*
1983 - *Beam* (based on a novel by Llorenc Villalonga)

Victor Erice

1969 - *Los desafios* (The Challenges) (one episode, co-directed by Guerin Hill and Egea)
1973 - *El espíritu de la colmena (Spirit of the Beehive)*
1983 - *El sur (The South)*

José Luis Garci

1977 - *Asignatura Pendiente (Exam Pending)*
1978 - *Solos en la Madrugada (Alone at Dawn)*
1979 - *Las verdes praderas (Green Meadows)*
1980 - *Viva la clase media (Long Live the Middle Class)*
1981 - *El Crack (The Crack)*
1982 - Volver a Empezar (To Begin Again)

Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón

1973 - *Habla, Mudita*
1977 - *Camada Negra (Black Brood)*
1977 - *Sonámbulos (Sleepwalkers)*
1978 - *El Corazón del bosque (In the Heart of the Forest)*
1980 - *Maravillas (Maravillas)*
1982 - *Demonios en el jardin*

Pilar Miró

1976 - *La petición (The Engagement)*
1978 - *Sábado de Gloria (Easter Sunday)*
1979 - *El crimen de Cuenca (The Crime of Cuenca)*
1980 - *Gary Cooper que estás en los cielos (Gary Cooper who art in Heaven)*
1982 - *Hablamos esta noche*

Carlos Saura

1957 - *Tarde de domingo* (documentary short)
1958 - *Cuenca* (documentary)
1959 - *Los golfos (The Hooligans)*
1963 - *Llanto por un bandido (Lament for a Bandit)*
1965 - *La Caza (The Hunt)*
1967 - *Peppermint frappé* (first film with Geraldine Chaplin)
1968 - *Stress es tres, tres (Stress is three, three)*
1969 - *La madriguera (The Den)*
1970 - *El jardín de las delicias (The Garden of Delights)*
1972 - *Ana y los lobos (Ana and the Wolves)*
1973 - *La prima Angélica (Cousin Angelica)*
1975 - *Cría cuervos (Cría/ Raise Ravens)*
1976 - *Elisa, vida mía (Elisa, my love)*
1978 - *Los ojos vendados (Blindfolded Eyes)*
1979 - *Mama cumple cien años (Mama Turns 100)* (sequel to *Ana and the Wolves*)
1980 - *¡De prisa! ¡De prisa! (Hurry Up, Hurry Up)*
1981 - *Bodas de sangre (Blood Wedding)*
1981 - *Dulces Horas (Sweet Hours)*
1982 - *Antonieta* (shot in Mexico)
1983 - *Carmen (Carmen)*

* Only those filmmakers whose names are frequently mentioned in this issue are included in the filmography. English titles are given only for those movies that have been shown abroad.

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*Note: I would like to thank José Luis Borau, Marvin D'Lugo, Samuel Mark and Ramón Araluce for suggesting titles to be included in this list.

ERRATA

for Quarterly Review Of Film Studies, Vol. 8, No. 2

Contents page
Those Obscure Objects of Buñuel
Buñuel, *Mon dernier soupir*
Cover Angela Molina [not: Angelina; also p. 24, caption]

Photo credits
EL CRIMEN DE CUENCA (Incine, S.A.)
RIO ABAJO (On the Line) (Amber films)

Page 2, col. 2, ¶1, line 9
their role of passive spectators [not: spectatorship]
Ibid., ¶3, line 5
Tamaño natural

Page 5, fn. 10, line 7
Saura's *Deprisa, deprisa.* [same error on page 23, col. 1, ¶2 p. 49, col. 1; pp. 51-53; p. 100, col. 2]

Page 11, col. 1, ¶3, lines 10 & 31
Angelino Fons
Saluti i força al canut
Ibid., col. 2, line 1
Gonzalo Herralde

Page 17, col. 2, ¶1, line 9
Jaime Chávarri

Ibid., ¶2, lines 3, 9, 10
"a man sent by God to save Spain"
Abad de Santillán
investigations [not: investigators]

Page 20, col. 2, ¶3, last 2 lines
Cría Cuervos won the Jury's Special Prize at the Cannes Film Festival. [not the Grand Prize]

Page 21, col. 2, ¶2, lines 16-17, & last line
¿Qué hace una chica como tú en un sitio como éste?
La mano negra

Page 38, col. 1, ¶3, line 2
assume
Ibid., col. 2, ¶2, line 15
position

Page 49, col 2, ¶2, lines 4-6
...Like the photographs that proliferate throughout recent Spanish cinema *(Elisa, Vida Mía, Spirit of the Beehive, My Dearest Señorita, Furtivos, Los Ojos Vendados)*

Page 50, col. 2, ¶2, line 4
¿Por que te vas?

Page 62, col. 1, ¶2, lines 5-14 [muddled text]
...I find it very exciting to what extent a human being can split in two—because it is the images of Angelica's split, the mother and daughter of 1936, that, at the same time, stand for the present mother and daughter; but notice that, obviously the daughter in 1936 and the mother in 1973 are in fact the same person. It is the confluence of two images, separated all along the picture, that are united at the last moment.

Page 66, col. 1, line 1
...is still only imaginary [not: imaginable]
Ibid., col. 1, last ¶, lines 4-7 [muddled text]
The first time both the audience and Don Alejandro see Goyita, she is rehearsing her role as Lady Macbeth for a school performance.

Page 83, col. 1, lines 2-4
...published his first novel, *Time of the Hero*, in 1963. In this and subsequent works, Vargas Llosa...

Page 91, title
Buñuel
Ibid., col. 1, lines 4-8
Luis Buñuel, who so clearly plays...Now, he is the focus...

Page 92, col. 1, line 1
unconscious
Ibid., col. 2, 6 lines from bottom [missing text]
...while *The Phantom of Liberty* "can best be understood in terms of its sweeping, episodic, anthropological and metonymic structural affinity with *L'Age d'or*". (p. 154)
As I suggested earlier, I find these textual analyses far more convincing in their own right than the psychoanalytic conclusions which Williams carefully constructs around them. For her intention is to show how in Buñuel's films the various filmic figures, recurrent objects and deliberate disturbances...[with these last two words the text joins up]

Page 97, col. 1, last ¶, lines 5-7
...when he came to Spain to make *Viridiana*, some of us dreamt... [omit the parentheses]

Page 98, fn. 8, line 9
...include actress Lily Damita [Lily Damita was not a *Spanish* actress.]
Ibid., fns. 12 & 14
"Le retour en Espagne" [spelling]

Page 99, col. 2
[Camada Negra should be translated as *Black Brood* rather than *Black Litter.]*

Page 100, col. 1, bottom
Sábado de Gloria (script not filmed)

Page 103, col. 1, lines 1-3
Manuel Gutierrez Aragon. Boyero, C. y Marinero, F. "Mucho más que lo correcto, buscar la emoción."